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HER SON

By Edith Wharton

A complete short novel by the distinguished author of "Ethan Frome," "The Age of Innocence," and "Old New York." This is one of the manuscripts selected for publication in the $5,000 Prize Contest.

I did not recognize Mrs. Stephen Glenn when I first saw her on the deck of the *Scythian*.

The voyage was more than half over, and we were counting on Cherbourg within forty-eight hours, when she appeared on deck and sat down beside me. She was as handsome as ever, and not a day older looking than when we had last met—toward the end of the war, in 1917 it must have been, not long before her only son, the aviator, was killed. Yet now five years later, I was looking at her as if she were a stranger. Why? Not, certainly, because of her white hair. She had had the American woman's frequent luck of acquiring it while the face beneath was still fresh, and a dozen years earlier, when we used to meet at dinners, at the Opera, that silver diadem already crowned her. Now, looking more closely, I saw that the face beneath was still untouched; what then had so altered her? Perhaps the faint line of anxiety between her dark strongly-drawn eyebrows; or the setting of the eyes themselves, those sombre starlit eyes which seemed to have sunk deeper into their lids, showed like glimpses of night through the arch of a cavern. But what a gloomy image to apply to eyes as tender as Catherine Glenn's! Yet it was immediately suggested by the look of the lady in deep mourning who had settled herself beside me, and now turned to say: "So you don't know me, Mr. Norcutt—Catherine Glenn?"

The fact was flagrant. I acknowledged it, and added: "But why didn't I? I can't imagine. Do you mind my saying that I believe it's because you're even more beautiful now than when I last saw you?"

She replied with perfect simplicity: "No; I don't mind—because I ought to be; that is, if there's any meaning in anything."

"Any meaning——?"

She seemed to hesitate; she had never been a woman who found words easily. "Any meaning in life. You see, since we've met I've lost everything: my son, my husband." She bent her head slightly, as though the words she pronounced were holy. Then she added, with the air of striving for more scrupulous accuracy: "Or at least, almost everything."

The "almost" puzzled me. Mrs. Glenn, as far as I knew, had had no child but the son she had lost in the war; and the old uncle who had brought her up had died years earlier. I wondered if, in thus qualifying her loneliness, she alluded to the consolations of religion.

I murmured that I knew of her double mourning; and she surprised me still farther by saying: "Yes; I saw you at my husband's funeral. I've always wanted to thank you for being there."

"But of course I was there."

She continued. "I noticed all of Stephen's friends

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who came. I was very grateful to them, and especially to the younger ones." (This was meant for me.) "You see," she added, "a funeral is—is a very great comfort."

Again I looked my surprise.

"My son—my son Philip—" (why she should think it necessary to mention his name, since he was her only child?)—"my son Philip's funeral took place just where his aeroplane fell. A little village in the Somme; his father and I went there immediately after the Armistice. One of our army chaplains read the service. The people from the village were there—they were so kind to us. But there was no one else—no personal friends; at that time only the nearest relations could get passes. Our boy would have wished it . . . he would have wanted to stay where he fell. But it's not the same as feeling one's friends about one, as I did at my husband's funeral."

While she spoke she kept her eyes intently, almost embarrassingly, on mine. It had never occurred to me that Mrs. Stephen Glenn was the kind of woman who would attach any particular importance to the list of names at her husband's funeral. She had always seemed aloof and abstracted, shut off from the world behind the high walls of a happy domesticity. But on adding this new indication of character to the fragments of information I had gathered concerning her first appearance in New York, and to the vague impression she used to produce on me when we met, I began to see that lists of names were probably just what she would care about. And then I asked myself what I really knew of her. Very little, I perceived; but no doubt just as much as she wished me to. For, as I sat there, listening to her voice, and catching unguarded glimpses of her crape-shadowed profile, I began to suspect that what had seemed in her a rather dull simplicity might be the vigilance of a secretive person; or perhaps of a person who had a secret. There is a world of difference between them, for the secretive person is seldom interesting and seldom has a secret; but I felt inclined—though nothing I knew of her justified it—to put her in the other class.

I began to think over the years of our intermittent acquaintance—it had never been more, for I had never known the Glenns well. She had appeared in New York when I was a very young man, in the 'nineties, as a beautiful girl—from Kentucky or Alabama—a niece of old Colonel Reamer's. Left an orphan, and penniless, when she was still almost a child, she had been passed about from one reluctant relation to another, and had finally (the legend ran) gone on the stage, and followed a strolling company across the continent. The manager had deserted his troupe in some far-off state, and Colonel Reamer, fatuous, impecunious, and no doubt perplexed as to how to deal with the situation, had yet faced it manfully, and shaking off his bachelor selfishness had taken the girl into his house. Such a past, though it looks dove-coloured now, seemed hectic in the 'nineties, and gave a touch of romance and mystery to the beautiful Catherine Reamer, who appeared so aloof and distinguished, yet had been snatched out of such promiscuities and perils.

Colonel Reamer was a ridiculous old man: everything about him was ridiculous—his "toupee" (probably the last in existence), his vague military title, his anecdotes about southern chivalry, and duels between other gentlemen with military titles and civilian pursuits, all the obsolete jejune swagger of a character dropped out of Martin Chuzzlewit. He was the notorious bore of New York; tolerated only because he was old Mrs. So-and-so's second cousin, because he was poor, because he was kindly—and because, out of his poverty, he had managed, with a smile and a gay gesture, to shelter and clothe his starving niece. Old Reamer, I recalled, had always had a passion for lists of names; for seeing his own appear in the "society column" of the morning papers, for giving you those of the people he had dined with, or been unable to dine with because already bespoken by others even more important. The young people called him "Old Previous Engagement" because he was so anxious to have you know that, if you hadn't met him at some particular party, it was because he had been previously engaged at another.

Perhaps, I thought, it was from her uncle that Mrs. Glenn had learned to attach such importance to names, to lists of names, to the presence of certain people on certain occasions, to a social suitability which could give a consecration even to death. The profile at my side, so marble-pure, so marble-sad, did not suggest such preoccupations; neither did the deep entreating gaze she bent on me; yet many details fitted into the theory.

Her very marriage to Stephen Glenn seemed a

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confirmation of it. I thought back, and began to reconstruct Stephen Glenn. He was considerably older than myself, and had been a familiar figure in my earliest New York; a man who was a permanent ornament to society, who looked precisely as he ought, spoke, behaved, received his friends, filled his space on the social stage, exactly as his world expected him to. While he was still a young man, old ladies in perplexity over some social problem (there were many in those draconian days) would consult Stephen Glenn as if he had been one of the Ancients of the community. Yet there was nothing precociously old or dry about him. He was one of the handsomest men of his day, a good shot, a leader of cotillions. He practised at the bar, and became a member of a reputed legal firm chiefly occupied with the management of old ponderous New York estates. In process of time the old ladies who had consulted him about social questions began to ask his advice about investments; and on this point he was considered equally reliable. Only one cloud shadowed his early life. He had married a distant cousin, an effaced sort of woman who bore him no children, and presently (on that account it was said) fell into suicidal melancholia; so that for a good many years Stephen Glenn's handsome and once hospitable house must have been a grim place to go home to. But at last she died, and after a decent interval the widower married Miss Reamer. No one was greatly surprised. It had been observed that the handsome Stephen Glenn and the beautiful Catherine Reamer were drawn to each other; and though the old ladies thought he might have done better, some of the more caustic remarked that he could hardly have done differently, after having made Colonel Reamer's niece so "conspicuous." The attentions of a married man, especially of one unhappily married, and virtually separated from his wife, were regarded in those days as likely to endanger a young lady's future. Catherine Reamer, however, rose above these hints as she had above the perils of her theatrical venture. One had only to look at her to see that, in that smooth marble surface, there was no crack in which detraction could take root.

Stephen Glenn's house was opened again, and the couple began to entertain in a quiet way. It was thought natural that Glenn should want to put a little life into the house which had so long been a sort of tomb; but though the Glenn dinners were as good as the most carefully chosen food and wine could make them, neither of the pair had the gifts which make hospitality a success, and by the time I knew them, the younger set had come to regard dining with them as somewhat of a bore. Stephen Glenn was still handsome, his wife still beautiful, perhaps more beautiful than ever; but the apathy of prosperity seemed to have settled down on them, and they wore their beauty and their affability like expensive clothes put on for the occasion. There was something static, unchanging in their appearance, as there was in their affability, their conversation, the menus of their carefully-planned dinners, the studied arrangement of the drawing-room furniture. They had a little boy, born after a year of marriage, and they were devoted parents, given to lengthy anecdotes about their son's doings and sayings; but one could not imagine their tumbling about with him on the nursery floor. Some one said they must go to bed with their crowns on, like the kings and queens on packs of cards; and gradually from being thought distinguished and impressive they came to be regarded as wooden, pompous and slightly absurd. But the old ladies still spoke of Stephen Glenn as a man who had done his family credit, and his wife began to acquire his figurehead attributes, and to be consulted, as he was, about the minuter social problems. And all the while—I thought as I looked back—there seemed to have been no one in their lives with whom they were really intimate . . .

Then, of a sudden, they again became interesting. It was when their only son was killed, attacked alone in mid-sky by a German air squadron. Young Phil Glenn was the first American aviator to fall; and when the news came people saw that the Mr. and Mrs. Glenn they had known were a mere *façade,* and that behind it were a passionate father and mother, crushed, rebellious, agonizing, but determined to face their loss dauntlessly though they should die of it.

Stephen Glenn did die of it, barely two years later. The doctors ascribed his death to a specific disease; but everybody who knew him knew better. "It was the loss of the boy," they said; and added: "It's terrible to have only one child."

Since her husband's funeral I had not seen Mrs. Glenn; I had completely ceased to think of her.

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And now, on my way to take up a post at the American Consulate in Paris, I found myself sitting beside her and remembering these things. "Poor creatures—it's as if two marble busts had been knocked off their pedestals and smashed," I thought, recalling the faces of husband and wife after the boy's death; "and she's been smashed twice, poor woman . . . Yet she says it has made her more beautiful . . ." Again I lost myself in conjecture.

II

I was told that a lady in deep mourning wanted to see me on urgent business, and I looked out of my private den at the Paris Consulate into the room hung with maps and Presidents where visitors were sifted out before being passed on to the Vice-Consul or the Chief.

The lady was Mrs. Stephen Glenn.

Six or seven months had passed since our meeting on the *Scythian,* and I had again forgotten her very existence. She was not a person who stuck in one's mind; and once more I wondered why, for in her statuesque weeds she looked nobler, more striking than ever. She glanced at the people awaiting their turn under the maps and the Presidents, and asked in a low tone if she could see me privately.

I was free at the moment, and I led her into my office and banished the typist.

Mrs. Glenn seemed disturbed by the signs of activity about me. "I'm afraid we shall be interrupted. I wanted to speak to you alone," she said.

I assured her we were not likely to be disturbed if she could put what she had to say in a few words——

"Ah, but that's just what I can't do. What I have to say can't be put in a few words." She fixed her splendid nocturnal eyes on me, and I read in them a distress so deep that I dared not suggest postponement.

I said I would do all I could to prevent our being interrupted, and in reply she just sat silent, and looked at me as if after all she had nothing farther to communicate. The telephone clicked, and I rang for my secretary to take the message; then one of the clerks came in with papers for my signature. I said: "I'd better sign and get it over," and she sat motionless, her head slightly bent, as if secretly relieved by the delay. The clerk went off, I shut the door again, and when we were alone she lifted her head and spoke. "Mr. Norcutt," she asked, "have you ever had a child?"

I replied with a smile that I was not married. She murmured: "I'm sorry—excuse me," and looked down again at her black-gloved hands, which were clasped about a black bag richly embroidered with dull jet. Everything about her was as finished, as costly, as studied, as if she were a young beauty going forth in her joy; yet she looked like a heart-broken woman.

She began again: "My reason for coming is that I've promised to help a friend, a poor woman who's lost all trace of her son—her only surviving son—and is hunting for him." She paused, though my expectant silence seemed to encourage her to continue. "It's a very sad case: I must try to explain. Long ago, as a girl, my friend fell in love with a married man—a man unhappily married." She moistened her lips, which had become parched and colourless. "You mustn't judge them too severely . . . He had great nobility of character—the highest standards—but the situation was too cruel. His wife was insane; at that time there was no legal release in such cases. If you were married to a lunatic only death could free you. It was a most unhappy affair—the poor girl pitied her friend profoundly. Their little boy . . ." Suddenly she stood up with a proud and noble movement and leaned to me across the desk. "I am that woman," she said.

She straightened herself and stood there, trembling, erect, like a swathed figure of woe on an illustrious grave. I thought: "What this inexpressive woman was meant to express is grief—" and marvelled at the wastefulness of Nature. But suddenly she dropped back into her chair, bowed her face against the desk, and burst into sobs. Her sobs were not violent; they were soft, low, almost rhythmical, with lengthening intervals between, like the last drops of rain after a long down-pour; and I said to myself: "She's cried so much that this must be the very end."

She opened the jet bag, took out a delicate handkerchief, and dried her eyes. Then she turned to me again. "It's the first time I've ever spoken of this . . . to any human being except one."

I laid my hand on hers. "It was no use—my pretending," she went on, as if appealing to me for justification.

"Is it ever? And why should you, with an old friend?" I rejoined, attempting to comfort her.

"Ah, but I've had to—for so many years; to be

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silent has become my second nature." She paused, and then continued in a softer tone: "My baby was so beautiful . . . do you know, Mr. Norcutt, I'm sure I should know him anywhere . . . Just two years and one month older than my second boy, Philip . . . the one you knew." Again she hesitated, and then, in a warmer burst of confidence, and scarcely above a whisper: "We christened the eldest Stephen. We knew it was dangerous; it might give a clue—but I felt I must give him his father's name, the name I loved best . . . It was all I could keep of my baby. And Stephen understood; he consented . . ."

I sat and stared at her. What! This child of hers that she was telling me of was the child of Stephen Glenn? The two had had a child two years before the birth of their lawful son Philip? And consequently nearly a year before their marriage? I listened in a stupour, trying to reconstruct in my mind the image of a new, of another, Stephen Glenn, of the suffering reckless man behind the varnished image familiar to me. Now and then I murmured: "Yes . . . yes . . ." just to help her to go on.

"Of course it was impossible to keep my baby with me. Think—at my uncle's! My poor uncle . . . he would have died of it. . ."

"And so you died instead?"

I had found the right word; her eyes filled again, and she stretched her hands to mine. "Ah, you've understood! Thank you. Yes; I died." She added: "Even when Philip was born I didn't come to life again—not wholly. Because there was always Stevie . . . part of me belonged to Stevie forever."

"But when you and Glenn were able to marry, why——?"

She hung her head, and the blood rose to her worn temples. "Ah, why? . . . Listen; you mustn't blame my husband. Try to remember what life was thirty years ago in New York. He had his professional standing to consider. A woman with a shadow on her was damned . . . I couldn't discredit Stephen . . . We knew *positively* that our baby was in the best of hands . . ."

"You never saw him again?"

She shook her head. "It was part of the agreement—with the persons who took him. They wanted to imagine he was their own. We knew we were fortunate . . . to find such a safe home, so entirely beyond suspicion . . . we had to accept the conditions." She looked up with a faint flicker of reassurance in her eyes. "In a way it no longer makes any difference to me—the interval. It seems like yesterday. I know he's been well cared for, and I should recognize him anywhere. No child ever had such eyes . . ." She fumbled in her bag, drew out a small morocco case, opened it, and showed me the miniature of a baby a few months old. "I managed, with the greatest difficulty, to get a photograph of him—and this was done from it. Beautiful? Yes. I shall be able to identify him anywhere . . . It's only twenty-seven years . . ."

III

Our talk was prolonged, the next day, at the quiet hotel where Mrs. Glenn was staying; but it led—it could lead—to nothing definite.

The unhappy woman could only repeat and amplify the strange confession stammered out at the Consulate. As soon as her child was born it had been entrusted with the utmost secrecy to a rich childless couple, who at once adopted it, and disappeared forever. Disappeared, that is, in the sense that (as I guessed) Stephen Glenn was as determined as they were that the child's parents should never hear of them again. Poor Catherine had been very ill at her baby's birth. Tortured by the need of concealment, of taking up her usual life at her uncle's as quickly as possible, of explaining her brief absence in such a way as to avert suspicion, she had lived in a blur of fear and suffering, and by the time she was herself again the child was gone, and the adoption irrevocable. Thereafter, I gathered, Glenn made it clear that he wished to avoid the subject, and she learned very little about the couple who had taken her child except that they were of good standing, and came from somewhere in Pennsylvania. They went to Europe almost immediately, it appeared, and no more was heard of them. Mrs. Glenn understood that Mr. Brown was a painter, and that they went first to Italy, then to Spain—unless it was the other way round. Stephen Glenn, it seemed, had heard of them through an old governess of his sister's, a family confidant, who was the sole recipient of poor Catherine's secret. Soon afterward the governess died, and with her disappeared the last trace of the mysterious couple. Their name was Brown—and it was not going to be easy to wander about Europe looking for a Mr. and Mrs. Brown who had gone to Italy or Spain with a baby twenty-seven years ago. But that was

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what Mrs. Glenn meant to do. She had a fair amount of money, she was desperately lonely, she had no aim or interest or occupation or duty—except to find the child she had lost.

What she wanted was some sort of official recommendation to our consuls in Italy and Spain, accompanied by a private letter hinting at the nature of her errand. These papers were duly prepared, and I took them to her. When I did so I tried to point out the difficulties and risks of her quest, and suggested that she ought to be accompanied by some one who would be able to advise her—hadn't she a man of business, or a relation, a cousin, a nephew? No, she said; there was no one; but for that matter she needed no one. If necessary she could apply to the police, or employ private detectives; and any American consul to whom she appealed would know how to advise her. "In any case," she added, "I couldn't be mistaken—I should always recognise him. He was the very image of his father. And if there were any possibility of my being in doubt, I have the miniature, and photographs of his father as a young man."

She drew out the little morocco case and offered it again for my contemplation. The vague presentment of a child a few months old—and by its help she expected to identify a man of nearly thirty!

Apparently she had no clue beyond the fact that, all those years ago, the adoptive parents were rumoured to have sojourned in Europe. She was starting for Italy at once because she thought she remembered that they were said to have gone there first—in itself a curious argument. Wherever there was an American consul she meant to apply to him. First at Genoa; then Milan; then Florence, Rome and Naples. In one or the other of these cities she would surely discover some one who could remember the passage there of an American couple named Brown, with the most beautiful baby boy in the world. Even the long arm of coincidence could not have scattered so widely over southern Europe American couples of the name of Brown, with a matchlessly beautiful baby called Stephen.

Mrs. Glenn set forth in a mood of almost mystical exaltation. She promised that I should hear from her as soon as she had anything definite to communicate: "which means that you *will* hear—and soon!" she concluded with a happy laugh. But six months passed without my receiving any direct news, though I was kept on her track by a succession of letters addressed to my chief by various consuls who wrote to say that a Mrs. Stephen Glenn had called with a letter of recommendation, but that unluckily it had been impossible to give her any assistance "as she had absolutely no data to go upon." Alas, poor lady——

And then, one day, about eight months after her departure, there was a telegram. "Found my boy. Unspeakably happy. Long to see you." It was signed Catherine Glenn, and dated from a mountain-cure in Switzerland.

IV

That summer, when the time came for my vacation, it was raining in Paris even harder than it had rained all the preceding winter, and I decided to make a dash for the sun.

I had read in the papers that the French Riviera was suffering from a six months' drought; and though I didn't half believe it, I took the next train for the south. I got out at Les Calanques, a small bathing-place between Marseilles and Toulon, where there was a fairish hotel, and pine-woods to walk in; and there, that very day, I saw seated on the beach the majestic figure of Mrs. Stephen Glenn. The first thing that struck me was that she had at last discarded her weeds. She wore a thin white dress, and a wide-brimmed hat of russet straw shaded the fine oval of her face. She saw me at once, and springing up advanced across the beach with a light step. The sun, striking on her hat brim, cast a warm shadow on her face; and in that semi-shade it glowed with recovered youth. "Dear Mr. Norcutt! How wonderful! Is it really you? I've been meaning to write for weeks; but I think happiness has made me lazy—and my days are so full," she declared with a joyous smile.

I looked at her with increased admiration. At the Consulate, I remembered, I had said to myself that grief was what Nature had meant her features to express; but that was only because I had never seen her happy. No; even when her husband and her son Philip were alive, and the circle of her well-being seemed unbroken, I had never seen her look as she looked now. And I understood that, during all those years, the unsatisfied longing for her eldest child, the shame at her own cowardice in disowning and deserting him, and perhaps her secret contempt for her husband for having abetted (or more probably exacted) that desertion, must have been eating into her soul, deeper, far deeper, than satisfied affections could reach. Now everything in her

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was satisfied; I could see it . . . "How happy you look!" I exclaimed.

"But of course." She took it as simply as she had my former remark on her heightened beauty; and I perceived that what had illumined her face when we had met on the steamer was not sorrow but the dawn of hope. Even then she had felt certain that she was going to find her boy; now she had found him and was transfigured. I sat down beside her on the sands. "And now tell me how the incredible thing happened."

She shook her head. "Not incredible—inevitable. When one has lived for more than half a life with one object in view it's bound to become a reality. I *had* to find Stevie; and I found him." She smiled with the inward brooding smile of a Madonna—a white-haired image of the eternal mother who, when she speaks of her children in old age, still feels them at the breast.

Of details, as I made out, there were few; or perhaps she was too confused with happiness to give them. She had hunted up and down Italy for her Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and then suddenly, at Alassio, just as she was beginning to give up hope, and had decided (in a less sanguine mood) to start for Spain, the miracle had happened. Falling into talk, on her last evening, with a lady in the hotel lounge, she had alluded vaguely—she couldn't say why—to the object of her quest; and the lady, snatching the miniature from her, and bursting into tears, had identified the portrait as her adopted child's, and herself as the long sought Mrs. Brown. Papers had been produced, dates compared, all to Mrs. Glenn's complete satisfaction. There could be no doubt that she had found her Stevie (thank heaven they had kept the name!), and the only shadow on her joy was the discovery that he was lying ill, menaced with tuberculosis, at some Swiss mountain cure. Or rather, that was part of another sadness; of the unfortunate fact that his adopted parents had lost nearly all their money just as he was leaving school, and hadn't been able to do much for him in the way of medical attention or mountain air—the very things he needed as he was growing up. Instead, since he had a passion for painting, they had allowed him to live in Paris, rather miserably, in the Latin Quarter, and work all day in one of those big schools—Julian's, wasn't it? The very worst thing for a boy whose lungs were slightly affected; and this last year he had had to give up, and spend several months in a cheap hole in Switzerland. Mrs. Glenn joined him there at once—ah, that meeting! —and as soon as she had seen him, and talked with the doctors, she became convinced that all that was needed to ensure his recovery was comfort, care and freedom from anxiety. His lungs, the doctors assured her, were all right again; and he had such a passion for the sea that after a few weeks in a good hotel at Montana he had persuaded Mrs. Glenn to come with him to the Mediterranean. But she was firmly resolved on carrying him back to Switzerland for another winter, no matter how much he objected; and Mr. and Mrs. Brown agreed that she was absolutely right——

"Ah; there's still a Mr. Brown?"

"Oh, yes." She smiled at me absently, her whole mind on Stevie. "You'll see them both—they're here with us. I invited them for a few weeks, poor souls. I can't altogether separate them from Stevie—not yet." (It was clear that eventually she hoped to.)

No, I assented; I supposed she couldn't; and just then she exclaimed: "Ah, there's my boy!" and I saw a tall stooping young man approaching us with the listless step of convalescence. As he came nearer I felt that I was going to like him a good deal better than I had expected—though I don't know why I had doubted his likeableness before knowing him. At any rate, I was taken at once by the look of his dark-lashed eyes, deep-set in a long thin face which I suspected of being too pale under the carefully-acquired sunburn. The eyes were friendly, humorous, ironical; I liked a little less the rather hard lines of the mouth, until his smile relaxed them into boyishness. His body, lank and loose-jointed, was too thin for his suit of light striped flannel, and the untidy dark hair tumbling over his forehead adhered to his temples as if they were perpetually damp. Yes, he looked ill, this young Glenn.

I remembered wondering, when Mrs. Glenn first told me her story, why it had not occurred to her that her eldest son had probably joined the American forces and might have remained on the field with his junior. Oddly enough this tragic possibility had never troubled her. She appeared to have forgotten that there had ever been a war, and that a son of her own, with thousands of young Americans of his generation, had lost his life in it. And now it looked as though she had been gifted with

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a kind of prescience. The war did not last long enough for America to be called on to give her weaklings, as Europe had, and it was clear that Stephen Glenn, with his narrow shoulders and hectic cheek-bones, could never have been wanted for active service. I suspected him of having been ill for longer than his mother knew.

Mrs. Glenn shone on him as he dropped down beside us. "This is an old friend, Stephen; a very dear friend of your father's." She added, extravagantly, that but for me she and her son might never have found each other. I protested: "How absurd," and young Glenn, stretching his long limbs out against the sand-bank, and crossing his arms behind his head, turned on me a glance of rather weary good-humour. "Better give me a longer trial, my dear, before you thank him."

Mrs. Glenn laughed contentedly, and continued, her eyes on her son: "I was telling him that Mr. and Mrs. Brown are with us."

"Ah, yes—" said Stephen indifferently. I was inclined to like him a little less for his undisguised indifference. Ought he to have allowed his poor and unlucky foster-parents to be so soon superseded by this beautiful and opulent new mother? But, after all, I mused, I had not yet seen the Browns; and though I had begun to suspect, from Catherine's tone as well as from Stephen's, that they both felt the presence of that couple to be vaguely oppressive, I decided that I must wait before drawing any conclusions. And then suddenly Mrs. Glenn said, in a tone of what I can only describe as icy cordiality: "Ah, here they come now. They must have hurried back on purpose——"

V

Mr. and Mrs. Brown advanced across the beach. Mrs. Brown led the way; she walked with a light springing step, and if I had been struck by Mrs. Glenn's recovered youthfulness, her co-mother, at a little distance seemed to me positively girlish. She was smaller and much slighter than Mrs. Glenn, and looked so much younger that I had a moment's doubt as to the possibility of her having, twenty-seven years earlier, been of legal age to adopt a baby. Certainly she and Mr. Brown must have had exceptional reasons for concluding so early that Heaven was not likely to bless their union. I had to admit, when Mrs. Brown came up to us, that I had overrated her juvenility. Slim, active and girlish she remained; but the freshness of her face was largely due to artifice, and the gold glints in her chestnut hair were a thought too golden. Still, she was a very pretty woman, with the alert cosmopolitan air of one who had acquired her elegance in places where the best counterfeits are found. It will be seen that my first impression was none too favourable; but, for all I knew of Mrs. Brown it might turn out that she had made the best of meagre opportunities. She met my name with a conquering smile, said: "Ah, yes—dear Mr. Norcutt. Mrs. Glenn has told us all we owe you" —and, at the "us" I detected a faint shadow on Mrs. Glenn's brow. Was it only maternal jealousy that provoked it? I suspected an even deeper antagonism. The women were so different, so diametrically opposed to each other in appearance, dress, manner, and all the inherited standards, that if they had met as strangers it would have been hard for them to find a common ground of understanding; and the fact of that ground being furnished by Stephen hardly seemed to ease the situation.

"Well, what's the matter with taking some notice of little me?" piped a small dry man dressed in too-smart flannels and wearing a too-white Panama which he removed with an elaborate flourish.

"Oh, of course! My husband—Mr. Norcutt." Mrs. Brown laid a jewelled hand on Stephen's recumbent shoulder. "Steve, you rude boy, you ought to have introduced your dad." As she pressed his shoulder I noticed that her long oval nails were freshly lacquered with the last new shade of coral, and that the forefinger was darkly yellowed with nicotine. This familiar colour-scheme struck me, at the moment, as peculiarly distasteful.

Stephen vouchsafed no answer, and Mr. Brown remarked to me sardonically: "You know you won't lose your money or your morals in this secluded spot."

Mrs. Brown flashed a quick glance at him. "Don't be so silly! It's much better for Steve to be in a quiet place where he can just sleep and eat and bask. His mother and I are going to be firm with him about that—aren't we, dearest?" She transferred her lacquered talons to Mrs. Glenn's shoulder, and the latter, with a just perceptible shrinking, replied gaily: "As long as we can hold out against him!"

"Oh, this is the very place I was pining for," said Stephen placidly. ("Gosh—pining!" Mr. Brown in-

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Who Knows Justice?

By Clarence Darrow

The plea for "justice, rather than mercy" is often heard. The country's best-known lawyer after fifty years in the courts of the land and a spectacular career as defender of unpopular causes, finds justice quite different from the popular conception of it.

THE Blind Goddess, who is supposed to adorn the courthouses of the world, represents the traditional legal views of Justice. She stands erect upon a pinnacle and holds her scales evenly balanced in her hand. Her eyes are bandaged so that she can see no one who willingly or unwillingly comes to her sacred temple. Sympathy and mercy, love and hate, pride, position, and station have no weight in her scales. All of these have nothing to do with that elusive, indefinable quality called Justice.

The Blind Goddess is presumed to be able to appraise and determine each human being's just deserts with the exactness with which the butcher weighs a pound of beef.

When I was young I was deeply interested in the cause of labor and all the political and social schemes looking toward the more equal distribution of wealth. As the years have passed, I find my zeal in this and many other causes has gradually cooled and almost disappeared. This attitude is not due to any change of mind. Almost instinctively I feel that my sympathies have remained constant as time has gone by, but the zest and hope that are always associated with a cause are not the same as in my early days.

I do not care to delude myself with the idea that this changed attitude is the result of the wisdom that old people are wont to think comes only with accumulated years. It by no means follows that men grow wiser as they grow older. It is more reasonable to believe that mental strength diminishes after maturity, and that the mind is at its best when the body is the strongest and most active. Whether the mind is only a function of the body, or something more, it at least seems clear that body and mind do not act independently of each other, and that the power of the intellect wanes as the structure fails. My zeal for the causes that once filled so much of my horizon has not diminished on account of added knowledge. The truth is, I know less about the labor question and the theories associated with that cause than I did twenty years ago.

I am quite sure that, intellectually, I can make as good an argument for private ownership of land, for unlimited individual control of business, for private monopoly—in short, for what passes as capitalism—as I can make for the socialistic view. I have little doubt that I could have done the same when I was young. Neither on these nor other vital questions does one arrive at his conclusions through intellectual processes. Ideas upon most subjects, like personal reactions, come from likes and dislikes. These no doubt depend partly on the inherent structure of the individual, and partly on the circumstances and conditions of his life.

All men are partisans. Great emotions, or small ones, impel us to choose our sides. When once the choice is made, arguments, historical incidents, phrases, aphorisms, and half-truths are marshalled to serve us in the arena.

When as a youth I listened to the poor man's cause I was deeply impressed with the statement that "what the working man wants is not charity but justice." This slogan made a strong appeal to me. It seemed to have a significance that smacked of truth and self-respect. Since then I have heard the plea for justice instead of mercy invoked in practically every cause that found a voice.

At first glance it seems as though no one with reason and feeling could fail to respond to the sentiment that all men are at least entitled to justice. The world and its attitudes have always been powerfully moved by slogans, catchwords, and

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phrases. They are the food devoured by the mind, and they form the basis of opinions and convictions. These, when organized, make parties and causes and crusades, and, for a time at least, seem to change the great movements of the world.

Still, there are few words so plain, and no slogans so simple, that they do not call for definition. And, strange to say, each man makes his definition to conform with the essence of his own being and the experiences of his life.

Are the problems of the human unit simplified by the demand for justice? In examining the dictionaries one finds many definitions of the word—but probably one will not be rewarded with any new light shed by so much as one word on the vital problems of life. Doubtless the word "justice" originally had reference to jurisprudence, but this narrow meaning was virtually abandoned long ago. No one would to-day pretend to say that the opinions of judges always furnish a correct conception of right and wrong. Lawyers and courts are human and have made all the mistakes that are incident to man and his institutions. Likewise, courts are bound by precedent, and interpret all words and phrases in the light of the past.

When one speaks of justice now he never uses the word in the sense of the decision of courts and juries. He has a vague sense of something that is higher and fairer and more far-seeing than established institutions—something that comes from the clouds, the intuitions of man, or some source more nebulous still.

We live in a world of inharmonies. It is made up of the wise and the foolish, the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, the fortunate and the ill-favored. Accidents of birth, health, temperament, and environment are all-powerful in settling individual destinies. What we call luck and chance is all-controlling not only in the lives of men and women but in the fate of states, the course of empires, the rise and decay of religions, and the customs, habits, and conduct of life.

By almost universal consent justice concerns the relations of human beings to society and the individual units that compose it. How much do mortals know of this fathomless subject? We do know that whether we will or not the fortune of each one who lives is hopelessly interwoven with the life and activities of his fellow man. This relation does not concern alone his friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and community, but reaches out in infinite ways to the farthest limits of the earth. A pebble dropped into the ocean will stir all the waters in all the seas. Just as surely and more plainly does the activity of each individual have some effect on all who live. While those who are the nearest to him seem most influenced, still, through food and clothing, through thought and expression, through opinions and beliefs, through trade and commerce, no man lives to himself or dies to himself.

Ford cars, for instance, travel the Sahara Desert, the mountain fastnesses, and unexplored regions where only a few persons have ever been. Whether one owns a car or not, his life is more or less influenced by Mr. Ford, and in turn the influence of Mr. Ford goes back to the men in his employ and to those with whom he deals, and whoever directly and indirectly comes in contact with him. What is true of the greatest is true of the least. The difference is one of degree alone.

But not only does the activity of all the living to some extent reach all people of the earth, but the deeds and influences of all the dead reach over the conscious world and affect it even more than do those who are still clinging tenaciously to the infinitely small spark of energy that we call life.

Of the countless billions who have lived and died, and the hundreds of millions who still lie down to sleep at night and awaken in the morning, no two, in the present or past, have ever had the same kind or degree of human equipment. Some have muscle and brawn that are needful to the world and its work. Some have inventive genius, and have helped to contrive the marvellous machines that now do most of the labor of this age. Certainly these men have made a large contribution to the joint achievements of the race. Yet no one ever really invented a machine. Each man began where some other left off. Each added something to all that went before. The work of no one could have been accomplished except for the common heritage of the past. The student of science has spent his intellect and energy to understand the operation of force and matter, and has thus made inventions possible. He, too, has had a large part in making the present world. His mind was so intent in unravelling the mysteries of life and the operation of the universe that personal reward, as men count reward, gave him slight concern. Not only has this class been an able and ready aid to the industry, trade, and commerce of the world, but it has lengthened existence, and what is more impor-

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tant, alleviated pain and suffering, and made it easier to live and die. The artists, poets, and men of letters, for the most meagre wage, have promoted human happiness and brightened the lives of millions who for a time have been diverted from the misery of a sordid world. Can any one conceive of any method of determining JUSTICE between all of these various units that make up society, or even between any two units who have worked for a common cause?

The written history of the race goes back but a little way. Ten thousand years would cover the whole span. The vast period of time that man has lived upon this globe has left scant evidence by which to form any correct idea of this prehistoric world. From the excavations in different portions of the earth we learn something of his existence for perhaps a hundred thousand years. This stretch of time covers the periods of stone and bronze and iron. Such remnants of his work as have found the light of day show the slow and long progress of the race. These testaments prove that a high degree of system and order must have grown as the centuries dawned and died. Even the first historical evidence shows that a very few rulers wielded absolute power over the destinies of their fellow men. Any feeling of universal rights was of the slowest growth. Every step up to the present was built upon what went before. Every age has carried into its traditions the concepts of the past. It follows that the rulers who controlled man's destiny always acted on the assumption that their ideas and ways not only were the best but were grounded in justice and right.

The story of the conquest of one people by another, or rather of one ruler by another, is only the story of the mighty who built their empires to preserve their immortality. The stupid and silent masses that made up the conquering and defeated armies had no part in the glories of the ancient world. Whatever the pretenses may have been, there was no claim that the great had the smallest consideration for their slaves, whose part it was to live and suffer and die to satisfy the arrogance of the strong.

Very slowly some of the privileges and powers that were once the prerogative of the ruler alone were parcelled out and, in a measure, divided amongst the strongest supporters of the chiefs. The monarch thought best to grant what seemed a certain portion of authority and its perquisites rather than risk the chance of losing all. Still the belief persisted that all right rested in the king or czar, and that all authority belonged to him alone. Whatever power was conferred on retainers was derived from the king and given in payment for services to the king.

The baron retainer built his castle on the mountain, beside the highways of commerce, and levied his toll upon all who passed by. The powerless traveller was ready to give all he had, if need be, if his life and liberty were spared. The wealth gathered by these barons was so great as to induce others to ply the same trade along the same highways. This led to wars between barons who marshalled their retainers for the right to levy tribute on the commerce which passed down lakes and rivers and over the early roads. It was easy for this form of force and pillage to grow into vested rights which were defended, and in essence are still defended by the organized society of to-day. Of course the rulers believed that the safety of the state depended upon the preservation of these vested rights. Every one should be rewarded for his efforts; otherwise the weak, the indolent, and the cowardly would inherit the earth.

Doubtless there are few, if any, organized governments in the world to-day that would permit any new right to be gained by the old means of physical force. While states would no longer recognize the justice of new robbery, most, if not all, of organized society validates the ancient titles founded on force and pillage.

But the ingenuity of the aggressive and dominant is untiring. Organized society might prevent the old-time methods of building up fortunes and estates by direct violence, but there still remained cheating, deceit, shrewdness, peculiar adaptability for getting wealth, the power of combined capital, and various methods of overreaching that were equally hostile to the common good. Physical strength is no longer needful for the conquest of the world. Powerful and specialized brains that easily overcome their fellows are much more effective than brute strength. Indeed, pure physical power is now condemned to toil and to serve the intellectual, the shrewd and self-seeking, in every way.

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The control of finance and industry and the highways of trade and communication are now so arranged that automatically the property of the world is constantly emptied into certain pools of wealth. A very slight difference in the intelligence, the cunning, or degree of individual fitness for that purpose causes the divergence between a life of drudgery and want and the command of all the resources of the world. Does the fact that some individuals are strong and crafty mean that justice had anything to do with their inheritance of the earth? Does this sort of activity represent any greater element of justice than the methods that prevailed with primitive man? To-day the captain of industry takes what he calls his because he has the power under the present rules, as did the barons of the middle ages under the rules of the game as it was played then. No more now than in olden time is it even intellect that brings rewards.

If there is any way to determine what the word "justice" means, man with his limitations has never yet found that way. It is evident that the rewards of this world are enjoyed by those whose strength or cleverness or greed or luck have given them the opportunity and might to take.

We think of justice in relation to the well-being of man. Justice, as generally understood, means that rewards follow from deserts. If this conception has any validity, then from what qualities, other than a certain sort of strength, does justice flow? Does justice concern virtue? Are those who control the earth better than the rest? Do the good things of the earth follow as a reward of merit for kindness, sympathy, charity, and other well-acknowledged virtues? Every one knows that these much-vaunted qualities do not bring wealth and power.

Is intellect a test of power? The wisest men of the earth have never been engaged in money-getting. What is the relative share of reward that should fall to the Newtons, Humboldts, the Darwins, the Einsteins, the Huxleys and Michelsons on the one hand, compared with the captains of industry who control the wealth of the world and the material destiny of man on the other hand? Does any one doubt to which group belongs the highest and the greatest intelligence? If justice rules, what apportionment of reward would be made between the captains of industry and the Pasteurs, Harveys, and Oslers, who have lengthened and made easier the life of man? Some of these could no doubt have turned their marvellous minds toward getting a greater share of the common bounty, but they had other and more important work to do. It will be remembered that Agassiz said that he had no time to make money.

How can any form of justice now applied by man determine what share of the common result should be taken by the brain-worker and what share doled out to the brawn-worker? How can it apportion shares between different kinds of manual labor? How can justice say what sort of brain-labor shall have the most, and what are the deserts of the various kinds?

It is obvious that no line of reasoning, no judicial process or human adjustments that the world has so far made, has ever sought a solution. It is plain that justice, as it is imagined, has nothing whatever to say about the share that each one takes. The distribution is determined by the peculiar sort of mental power applied, combined with the strength or weakness of the will and the fortunes of the different lives.

Even though one may not fathom the processes by which the hideous inequalities of life are brought about, he can at least see the results that come from our complex life.

We have made production so easy and abundant that the great concern of the state is that we produce too much. The distribution is so unequal and unfair that the laborer cannot buy and use the things he makes. The machines now yield more than our crazy system of distribution can possibly put in the hands of those whose needs are great. And their power and fecundity are growing apace.

No age in the past ever had even a faint conception of the enormous private fortunes that have been heaped up in every great city on the earth. And yet in America, the most favored land under the sun, the mass of our people are not far removed from want. Young boys and girls work in factories, hotels, restaurants and stores for insufficient pay. Most of these are haunted by worry lest they cannot get homes and clothes, and food and jobs. Men who reach middle life without a fortune are thrown out of employment and coldly scrapped for the virile and the young.

Great fortunes are spent for pearls and diamonds, for costly clothes, and food, and offices and habita-

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tions, for trinkets and baubles and useless things, while the workman lives in constant fear that a machine will take his job. The poor who serve in hotels and public places, who crowd streets and parks, in every nook and around every corner, hold out their hands for tips and alms.

The farmers are madly calling on the government for help because they have produced too much. Life has grown to be a Bedlam where peace and quiet and comfort and ease are scarcely known. The world has learned to produce wealth almost by magic, but it knows nothing, and seems to care less, about trying to solve the problem of distributing what it makes. In the general madness lawyers and judges, and business men and working men talk of justice as if the word had some meaning which they could understand.

It should always be remembered that man's views of justice have changed as the stream of life has flowed along. It can be conceived and even hoped that the final word has not yet been said. Judges no longer sentence human beings to death for stealing a sheep or a sixpence, or for witchcraft or heresy. We no longer kill the ill or old, or imprison the unfortunate for debt. There are men and women who have a vision of justice that, so far, the world has never yet reached.

Justice, now and always, has been based upon accepted rules, upon precedents, upon the landmarks of the past. Still, in a halting way, all old landmarks have been passed on the road, accepted rules are going out of date, and new conceptions of justice are slowly dawning upon the human mind. Might it not be possible that the world could conceive of a sense of the word "justice" where health and strength and intellect would call for public service, and weakness, old age, and want would be given a greater share because of its very wants? Who knows that it is just for the strong to take more than he can use, and the weak, the helpless, the unfortunate, and unadjusted to take less than enough to satisfy his needs?

It is idle to expect justice and its machinery to solve any of the problems that plague and torture man. It never has and never can. Justice, at the best, is a human conception and is not a living thing. The great movements of the race have not been born of justice, but of the deep, controlling emotions that are inherent in the human structure. While we do not know and cannot possibly find out the meaning of justice, we still know that emotions have changed the conduct of men and the foundations of states. Religious feeling, wars, and the love of freedom are some of the urges that have changed and at times overturned the old civilizations of the world. The philosopher William James years ago pointed out the fact that emotions rule life, and said he hoped that the desire for the study of science might sometime become the urge which would fill the place that so long had been occupied by war. Even though at the present time science seems harnessed to machines and given to the service of producing wealth for profit, a broader conception might bring it to the service of the world.

Instead of talking vaguely of justice, while devoting their energies to getting more things that they cannot use, the organizers and captains may sometime use their intellect and power to free the world from want. An undertaking like this could easily be carried out. The machines can do the work. What is needed is the profound sympathy without which man cannot give his services to any altruistic task.

Whatever visions we may form of the word "justice," still it has never meant anything except adjusting human claims and human conduct to the established habits and customs and institutions of the world. Justice never can be a lofty ideal. It has no emotions nor passions. It has no wings. Its highest flight is to the Blind Goddess that stands on the courthouse roof. It savors of syllogisms and fine distinctions which have no meaning or value in the important matters of life. But there is no uncertainty in the meaning and effect of charity, of sympathy, of generosity, or of understanding. Without these man is dead. With them he can create a new world where human beings may have all the happiness that it is possible for life to give. These emotions grow from his associations with his fellow man. They are the children of imagination. They spring from sensing the weakness, the troubles, and the sorrows of all those who live. They make the whole world kin. The realization of common suffering and common needs brings no desire for the nice distinctions urged in the name of justice. It brings only the desire to help in proportion to one's strength.

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The Ethics of this Machine Age

By Edward A. Filene

The stimulating and thoughtful article "A Search for the Centre" by Doctor Charles A. Beard in the January SCRIBNER'S *furnished an interesting point of departure for the expression of convictions by some of the country's leading men concerning the new way of life for the United States. As the first of these brief papers, we present that of the Boston merchant whose views on economic matters have had wide influence. His latest book, "Successful Living in This Machine Age," gives in full his philosophy.*

I AM amazed at my complete agreement with Doctor Beard. I approach the search for a centre from the market-place and Doctor Beard from the study and yet we are on the same road materially and spiritually.

There is no disputing that we are in need of a scheme of ethics which will command allegiance, and hoist a moral standard to which all mankind may repair. The world is sick. Its factories are stilled by the greatest financial depression in history, its nerves are raw from years of post-war strain, its character has been tried by a succession of world-wide explosions.

The ages which have gone immediately before have struggled vainly to adjust the clash between the Christian morals of the Agricultural Age and the naturalistic philosophy brought about by the First Industrial Revolution. It has been a hopeless task, as Doctor Beard points out. What must be substituted for it is obviously something which considers our needs rather than our hopes. We may all yearn for the return of hoop skirts and gallantry, but we are living in the Machine Age and all our wishing will not dissipate it, nor can I join with those who wish it dissipated.

"The most desirable, the firmest, foundation for a system of ethics is the good life for as many people as possible," writes Doctor Beard. I say in reply that the Machine Age with its system of mass production offers the greatest opportunity for extending the good life to the masses that the world has ever known.

The Machine Age is the age of mass production and, whether we like it or not, mass production is liberating men. Mass production is *production for the masses.* It is production motivated by the desire for the greatest total profits which are only possible by selling the largest quantities by giving the greatest values at the lowest cost to the greatest number of people. It is motivated, moreover, not by any sudden burst of altruism but because the great stream of human selfishness compels that line of action. Since mass production must have the widest possible market, this complete abandonment to service is imperative.

Mass production means mass consumption and a complete alteration in the thinking of the majority of industrialists and bankers. It means the facing of a new set of problems which are likely to seem imponderables, but I am personally not frightened by imponderables, and economic forces in their own elephantine and tortuous fashion have a way of getting around such mountains of opposition. I very clearly am a "possibilist" as contrasted with the "impossibilists" Doctor Beard mentions. The distinction may be brought out in considering a house overrun with vermin. The conservative will do nothing because he considers vermin normal and natural, houses have always had them and always will have them; the liberal objects to any action against the vermin because of his sympathy for defenseless animals; the radical in his rage with such a state of affairs burns down the house; the possibilist cleans it up.

I can accept no excuse for the lack of courage of a form of society, Capitalism, which will shirk the

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responsibilities of a system of business life which it has invented and set into motion. The factory system is no more a natural force than is the automobile which is one of its most successful products. To say that nothing can be done about Capitalism, a man-made structure, is to say that brakes on a motor car are an unjust restriction on a proud organism operating under the policy of *laissez-faire*. All things are possible that are not contrary to the laws of nature, and I hold that continuing to live under any other assumption is a species of folly unthinkable for a human race which prides itself on the attributes of intelligence.

Mass production contains within itself all the ingredients necessary for the good life. For uncertain, emotional, moral indignation it has substituted intelligent selfish interest. Political and business graft will be impossible in an age of mass production because every industry is so completely dependent upon the mass consumer's dollar that every business man, when he discovers the situation, must soon be fighting to preserve that dollar as earnestly and as constantly as he can be depended upon to fight for the preservation of his own business. The selfish basis of this feeling is its strongest asset. We are living in a practical age and there is little use in trying to fit an outworn philosophy to a modern problem. The force it will have in international affairs, world peace, world tariffs, political purity, and good living cannot be exaggerated once the premise of mass production and mass consumption is accepted.

Now just what does mass production entail and how may these benefits I speak of be brought about? What is its ethical value? Mass production is not a new thing. The doctrine of Henry Ford has spread widely and rapidly about the world. This is true and it is equally true that mass production is working in only about twenty-five per cent of American industry. It is difficult to convince industry that times have changed.

We are told that we have been on an orgy of spending and that we must get down to bed-rock. The trouble, they say, is "over-production," and business must now unite to limit production to the market demands. In other words, the people, because of unemployment, are buying less than before; therefore we should increase unemployment so that they may buy even less. Only some fundamental superstition can account for such a proposal as that, and yet it is widespread. It is because our bankers and industrialists with few exceptions are still living in the time of the First Industrial Revolution. Banks are preaching thrift and using the products of that thrift to aid factory production in a land dangerously ill from over-financed production, and under-financed consumption. Failing to see that the time for financing the producer is past and that the next step must be a systematic effort to extend credit to the masses, the financier has been urging the limiting of production to the existing state of the market, forgetting that when production slows down, there is less employment and buying inevitably slows down in proportion.

From the time the first bolt of cotton cloth was turned out in Lancashire, all emphasis has been placed on stimulating production. Banks have financed it, stock markets have furnished funds for it, industries have "ploughed back" their profits into it, and the entire weight of national and international credit has been thrown to its assistance. By exploiting foreign markets and home labor, the wieldy machine could be made to operate. But plainly it is impossible to have production without consumption, and what was being done to aid consumption? There was instalment buying and that admittedly was a great help. There have also been the credit unions, which I am proud to have had a hand in starting and which have been an unqualified success. But they are all—a mere drop in the ocean of wealth. With all production and no attention to consumption, there was only one possible answer: bad business and unemployment.

Quite contrary to my original thought in the matter, I do not believe that the short work-day can by itself cure unemployment. Furthermore, I am convinced that wise business men, instead of wasting their efforts fighting the "dole," will accept state insurance as inevitable. My suggestion is that they work for an Unemployment Insurance Act which will give employers the option of taking out state insurance or developing their own system. In both groups, the cost of unemployment would be high; but among the state-insured, an individual employer could do little to bring down the cost, while an employer who accepted personal responsibility would make it a matter of business to prevent unemployment within his organization.

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He would make war on waste—to save insurance costs, and he would be able to reduce prices to such an amount that the increased demand would enable him to re-employ his force. Under state insurance, employers would have no such incentive, for even those who did organize new employment would still have to pay for the unemployment caused by others. The tendency, then, would be for employers to discard state insurance and undertake the responsibility themselves. And that is about all that is needed for a solution of the unemployment problem. When all employers wake up and accept their responsibility, the problem will be solved. And those who do not wake up in such a situation will soon cease to be employers.

This unemployment part of the discussion has been a digression from Doctor Beard's quest for a centre, but it is my way of showing that the new ethics will not come from study and philosophical thinking but will grow out of successful living in the Machine Age. We are living in the Second Industrial Revolution which is the period in which the First Industrial Revolution (which began with the establishment of the factory system) has reached its maturity. The great meaning of it is that it inaugurates selfish, actual, factual co-operation in accordance with man as he really is and not with some theory of what he should be. It promotes honesty, morality, and the Golden Rule by the very intensity of its selfishness. With mass production the consumer is king. It is no longer a matter of profits from the patronage of the few; but business self-preservation by meeting the needs and desires of the masses.

I have no fear of the deadening of the spirit which might result from standardization. Those who have been parroting the groundless superstition that machinery is making automatons of us all, may be pondering whether to lease a city apartment or a house in the suburbs, or whether to build a beautiful little house according to their own sweet dreams, with an acre or two of lawn and flowers, thoroughly equipped with hot and cold water and electric cooking and refrigeration.

As to the good life, we may be certain that when the masses are freed from the struggle for existence, they will furnish an environment in which true art can thrive. To me the Golden Age lies just ahead. I do not mean that artists must engage in mass production or that they must limit their work to a dead level of mediocrity in the futile hope of appealing to everybody's taste. Artists will not be hampered, as historically they have been hampered, by the necessity of submitting their work to the narrow and almost necessarily biassed judgment of an economically dominant class. The liberation of the masses, it must be remembered, is the inevitable goal of mass production, and it must not be confused with any merely benevolent endeavor to see that the toiling classes are well fed, well clothed, and well kept. Taming the masses cannot be any part of the mass production programme. The masses must be freed, rather, to venture into realms of human living from which they have been debarred before. In this emancipation of the very soul of man, it seems to me that one must sense the beginning of a new and finer, although as yet incomprehensible, Art.

And so financing the consumer is coming and coming at once and coming to stay, because intelligent selfishness demands it. Financing the consumer means bigger wages and salaries—higher and higher standards of living for the masses. And so the sustained ethics of the machine age are bringing that service and justice to the masses that Christian ethics wanted but could not bring.

Next month—Stuart Chase's conclusions concerning a new economic order for the United States. And the first of Frank R. Kent's inside stories of what goes on behind the political front as the presidential struggle approaches. And F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Hollywood Revisited."

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American Painters: The Snob Spirit

By Thomas Craven

The author of "Men of Art" calls for a new vitality in American art. Here again is evidence of the growing appreciation of the great field for civilization in the United States and the need for a new estimate of America's potentialities.

In discussing American art, I have placed special emphasis on the significance of its subject-matter. Again and again, with all the temper at my command, I have exhorted our painters to remain at home in a familiar background, to enter emotionally into the strong native tendencies of their own land and kind, to have done with European traditions and alien cultural fetishes.

This critical attitude, let me say at once, has not been prompted by jingoistic motives; nor is it the presumptuous cackle of the layman who would thrust his advice upon initiates in the craft of painting. Like many other observers, I have watched the rise and fall of French Modernism in America; I have viewed with indignation the snobbery, the factitious refinement, the incurable servility of our professional exhibitors; and like the good politician in search of new issues, I have discovered in the undercurrent of American art the direction of emerging tendencies. Furthermore, I have found in these tendencies a close resemblance to conditions of the past: I am reminded continually of the trials and achievements of Ryder, Homer and Eakins, and I could, at any moment, lay hands on hundreds of prints, woodcuts and illustrations which are not only of genuine artistic merit, but which, in their character, are true reflections of the American spirit. Against the annual crop of sickly plants nurtured in the Bohemian slums of Europe and then transplanted to America, this homegrown stuff stands out vigorous and healthy—crude perhaps, and a little naïve, but real. Better one Ryder than a dozen Whistlers; better a few nameless illustrators working for the old *Police Gazette* than an army of imitators of Matisse and Picasso.

American painting suffers from over-refinement, a disease common to most of our cultural activities. All the argument in the world will not make America old in spirit. To this day she has preserved a semi-barbaric physical frontier—and the frontiers of her mental life reach out darkly into Voodooism. Granted the inflexible, second-hand, British culture of Boston, there is, on the borders of this culture, rural New England with its folkways and superstitions, and industrial New England with its immigrant slaves, half-starved and illiterate. If any one doubts the existence of the semi-barbaric culture of the South—the whole of Dixieland from the huts of the hill billies to the dilapidated mansions of lascivious colonels—let him read Thomas Wolfe's epic, "Look Homeward, Angel." The substance and staple of Western novelists from Mark Twain to Dreiser, Cather, Anderson and Lewis, is the pioneer spirit struggling against or enmeshed in the shams of refinement.

On the culture of the Middle West I speak with the authority of personal experience. My father went West in a stage coach; I was born and raised on the plains among migrating cow-gentlemen, hysterical politicians, abolitionists, prohibitionists, gamblers and ignorant wheat farmers; I remember vividly how poor folks in covered wagons returned sadly from Oklahoma, the victims of sooners at the opening of the Cherokee strip. And my experiences are not exceptional. The American family, as Walter Lippmann pointed out in his book on morals, has been and is to-day constantly on the move, advancing frontiers, and carrying the spirit of the frontiersman into our cities, our religions, our government, and our international conferences.

Thus it has happened that barbaric religions and primitive habits of thought flourish profusely in America. Mormonism grows numerically stronger

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year by year; quacks abound; the screech of the Holy Roller echoes in the suburbs of our great cities; senators and stock-brokers consult female astrologers; and cults based upon faith healing and the amulets of medicine men multiply beyond all calculation. Refine these cults a little; put them in dress coats; smear upon their uncouth ceremonials the transcendentalism of Boston or the fake mysticism of the Orient, and they become Christian Science or New Thought; they develop into powerful social and political organizations, invading the privacy of our homes, framing fool laws, taking away the liquor of our fathers, and playing into the hands of gangsters who, in true frontier fashion, subvert the law of the land with the shooting iron. But keep the frontier undefiled by cultural pretensions; let it develop naturally within its own limits; and it produces not only valid art forms but the beginnings of an organic tradition of art. It calls upon God in sublime rhetoric; it breaks out in folk songs, ballads and spirituals; and until a few years ago, dealing with things it loved and understood, it produced pictures: chalk-cuts, woodcuts to embellish sheet music, almanacs, and illustrations for popular sentimental magazines and sporting journals which frequently touch the realm of masterly composition.

From this I do not wish to imply that the artist should retain the characteristics of a hill billy. By doing so he would only limit the range of his perceptions and consequently the range of his art. The charm of folk art is centred in the genuine character of its meanings. Its forms are simple, and its meanings, as I have already indicated, are limited; but it brings forward in sharper light than a more sophisticated and hence more complicated art, the intimate connection between form and meaning.

As a matter of fact, the popular engravings and illustrations which I have cited were not altogether indigenous products of the New World. A certain amount of education and tradition was involved in their production—and European education at that! My point is that the educational heritage was submitted to influences operating in a new environment; that old forms and conventionalized methods were not repeated habitually for their own sakes but put to work in new situations; and that traditional practices were radically modified by the exigencies of new situations. It is the old story of survival through adaptability. Art, like all biological growths, adjusts itself to new conditions or dies in a world of perpetual change.

If there is anything in art that may be termed a certainty, it is the fact that participation of some sort is essential to appreciation. To know and understand a work of art, one must be able to enter into it, to participate in the spirit that created it. One cannot remain apart, especially above it, and appreciate its values or measure its appeal. In this sense, art may be compared to true Christianity where pride and caste have no place, and where simple vulgar honesty is more likely to afford the key to salvation. Art is a social phenomenon, or it is nothing. It proceeds from special habits intimately related to ways of living; and as an activity, it is subject to the vagaries of living. Let us look into this matter as it pertains to the growth of American society.

Take, for instance, the indentured servant of pre-Revolutionary days. Having served his term, or left his master in the night, he takes to the backwoods and establishes a homestead. He is a rough fellow —he was rough when he came to the Colonies, and in his new environment, engaged wholly in the struggles for self-preservation, he has acquired no polish. He had no position in the motherland: he was an underdog or he would never have sold himself into bondage. Swiftly and naturally he adopts the psychology of the American frontiersman. His sons and daughters are rough: their cultural accretions are confined to ways of invoking the mercies of the Almighty God and singing rather mournful songs. As time goes on, these accretions, under pressure of a new environment and a new psychology, begin to assume a unique character. Despite an inherited technic, they are shaped into new patterns. The far-off European background of the indentured servant with his sorrows and afflictions is obliterated; and his descendants, unconsciously perhaps, find themselves in possession of the stuff of art. It is crude and simple stuff, but it has this in common with the ingredients of the greatest art: it is formed of direct experiences with living materials.

Let us suppose that our homesteader had the good luck to fasten upon a piece of land which in due course proved to be strategically situated with reference to inter-regional trade; and that his great-grandchildren, in consequence, amassed enormous fortunes as traders, manufacturers, or middlemen. Here we arrive at a momentous turning-point in

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ways of living—and incidentally in the growth of art. For the first generation, carrying the burden of a moderately improved economic status, local display is sufficient. Exaltation of the plain self—without formalities or blushing—is entirely satisfactory. Such art as is practised is not esteemed as a means to social advancement nor as a mark of superiority, but as a simple delight, a natural appetite to be vigorously indulged. Give any share-cropping fiddler or untutored hill singer a little leisure, even to-day, and he does not question his art—he indulges it.

In the next generation, however, this forthright attitude begins to disappear, and in succeeding generations it is lost altogether. Cities are built; social distinctions are more closely drawn; wealth is centralized; the wheels of education are set in motion; huge sums of money are devoted to the business of mass refinement; people begin to put on airs and to affect nice ways of behaving. Now nothing could exceed the obvious refinement of the kitchen girl transformed into a lady. And the example of the kitchen girl, during the process of transformation, offers an exact parallel to conditions that have prevailed in American painting. Ignoring the original and brilliant contributions of our novelists and architects; following year after year the predatory trail of Whistler through European schools and masterpieces; the American painter has endeavored to put on the elegance and style of the Continentals. His achievements, on the whole, have been glittering dexterity and pathetic imitation. Ashamed of his heritage and his environment, he parades the exaggerated niceties, the polite mannerisms of cultures which, being most remote from his own social roots, seem to be, by the very magic of distance, most worthy of imitation.

A few parvenus can do no great harm—they may indeed be highly amusing—but when the parvenu spirit becomes a national attitude, the condition may be properly described as calamitous. From the very beginning our students are taught that painting is essentially a European accomplishment; our museums, especially the newer foundations with their rich endowments, to win social distinction, buy Old Masters—usually second-rate examples—and the smarter specimens of French Modernism, and become dumping grounds for dealers, and the dupes of sharpers known as experts; the owners of the new Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, planning congenial decorations for their parvenu diners, shell out $100,000 for the bombastic swoonings of a second-rate Spaniard; and our cunning dealers employ as agents men and women socially prominent in communities where the art fad is momentarily raging, and where art, like cold creams and beauty lotions, gains prestige by the indorsements of the elect. So the parvenu spirit is consolidated, and the painter can hardly do otherwise than reflect this spirit, and cater to it, and feed it with shams and masquerades in the European manner.

Is there no escape?

On the face of it there would seem to be no hope for better things. But let us bear in mind that the "national life" of any country at a given period is only a convenient fiction attached to and sustaining the classes temporarily in power, and that so far as the great majority is concerned, the expression has no validity. How many conceptions of national life have been recently exploded by the more enlightened historians! We used to be taught that the Greeks were a race of blonde gods and goddesses, and that every man, woman and child in Renaissance Italy possessed an incomparable sense of art; a few years ago our hysterical patriots told us that the national life of Germany was a sadistic, practical application of the philosophy of Nietzsche; and the old notion that the French are a superior people blest with the higher attributes of liberty, refinement and the emancipated æsthetic spirit, is now entertained only by American painters and critics to fashionable magazines. The rank and file everywhere are plain souls who work, dream, drink, and loaf—and sometimes think—who, like all good realists, take what they can get from their environment, each according to his lights.

The great difficulty with art in this connection is its affectation of caste. It has ceased to be work and has become genteel behavior; it has ceased to function as a social need and has become the property of vainglorious dilettantes. In subject-matter and in form, it is polite and mannered rather than sensitive and creative. It has abandoned the riches of American life for a parvenu, or false environment. For the essence of American life is no more to be found in Newport, Southampton and Palm Beach than at the Ritz Bar in Paris, or among the pajama-ed gamblers of the Riviera. The only outlet,

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the sole means of escape, for the American painter lies in the discovery of the local essence, after which we hope for a viable native school and eventually for the sublimation of its forms.

No one, not even the most condescending of British lecturers, would call Henry Thoreau a backwoods yokel; nor would the angriest apostle of New Humanism call Henry Ford a thinker. Yet the forms, literary and industrial, accruing from the work of the two men sprang originally from the homeliest and least adorned of realities, from typically American realities. The painter, of course, must be an educated man, that is to say, educated in the true sense of the term, as the great painters of the past were educated in the civilizations producing them. He cannot, and call himself an artist, be a moping, anti-social beggar, or a parvenu, or an ignorant worshipper of an imported æstheticism that has no place in the realities of American life. He must also be educated in the language of his craft. For all art is composed of a language which must be learned and mastered, a language embodying not only technologies but human meanings, social and psychological assessments—the infinite surmises and experiences of the soul of man. But the language of the plastic arts, in spite of its long period of currency, is still extraordinarily flexible, lending itself to new combinations and new units of expression to meet the demands of new environments. Here I must emphasize the fundamental kinship between form and meaning, and show how procedure—the formal instrument of art—is modified and vitalized by subject-matter, by the interests that inspire it.

Repudiating subject-matter, the average painter returns what appears to be a devastating rejoinder. "It makes no difference what one paints," he says. "The *form* is the thing. If the objective characteristics are not of the first importance, then no subject, however exciting, can redeem the failure." In some respects he is right. But, like the common run of professors and critics who bolster up his opinions, he overlooks the fact that the forms of art are the direct offspring of experiences, and that any experience, whether new or stereotyped, produces its equivalent in form. It may be, in stereotyped experiences, a pretty low grade of art, but it reflects unmistakably in its objective characteristics the mental habits of its maker—his poverty-stricken emotions, his dependence on others, and the whole background of his existence.

By the word form, I mean the integration of the elements included in an expression, the cohesion, in the plastic or graphic arts, of line, mass, volume, tone, and color. Psychologically, the way in which these elements are successfully put together is the result of habitual modes of action which by constant repetition become expert and automatic.

In plain language, the artist, by persistence and repeated effort, learns and masters his technic. During the process of learning, the tendency to do things in his own way gradually becomes a matter of routine, and when he has mastered his tools, he handles them more or less automatically, proceeding in well-defined channels of action. By the force of habit, if he is at all expert, he uses his technic as easily and naturally as the pedestrian uses his bones. If he is timorous and conventional, or a believer in art for art's sake; if his notion of art is to approximate the qualities he admires in the work of others; then his mental and technical habits will be formed entirely upon precedent, and the best that he can achieve is eclectic combinations. On the other hand, if he is a man of originality—one in whom performance is a means to express interests that reside not in art but in life—the technical equipment left to him by tradition will be radically modified, and precedent will play only a minor part in the formation of his mental habits. With the first, form is necessarily repetition; with the second, by the very nature of the compelling interest, it will be, to a certain extent, original expression. Originality in art is proportionate to the power of interest to communicate itself; and by communication I do not mean the simple process of recording a fact, as the snapshot records it, but the creation of a new and appropriate vehicle—a new form.

All of us, after our modes of action have grown hardened and habitual, find that we have created for ourselves a very congenial atmosphere of personal judgments and valuations which, in turn, fortify and rationalize our habits. The parvenu spirit with its exaltation of the *status quo* is a perfect example of crystallized habits, of proper and correct behavior pedestalled and worshipped. It constitutes therefore the ideal background for our lazy-minded art dealers and the pushing artists

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whom they exploit. It is also their livelihood and often a source of great wealth, and as such, justifies the rationalization of villainous habits.

Forms—objective manifestations of behavior—are inseparable from habits, and the psychology of their development is identical with the psychology of other activities. Our modes of action, to a great degree, are based upon traditional observances. "Man," as Havelock Ellis says, "is a bundle of inherited tendencies which come he scarcely knows how or whence." It is not only natural but inevitable that we should do things as we have learned to do them until a situation of vital importance exposes the inadequacy of routine ways. Then, and then only, is the inertia broken and the revision of habits possible.

But formal habits cannot be revitalized without first-hand experiences and fresh interests. To imitate or borrow the code of another does not make for new forms except in the most restricted personal sense. The common American custom of affecting European forms—after their canonization—unquestionably stimulates individual effort, but once we apply an objective criterion to such effort, the true state of affairs is revealed as hopelessly parvenu. The parvenu artist is afflicted with submerged feelings of inferiority, which explains his snobbish adoration of European manners. How easily he forgets the realities of American life in his ambition to behave properly! How quickly he rationalizes propriety, or conduct established by centres of good taste, into intelligent behavior! How arrogantly he seizes upon everything which, in its essentials, is most distant from the common local environment!

The parvenu spirit in its most obnoxious form is generally associated with the hard determination of the *arriviste* to be successful. This is a grave error. To desire success and to be successful are only plain sense. What is really pernicious is the disposition to scorn conditions and realities responsible for success because they do not seem to correspond to accepted patterns of living in the station arrived at. If all successful people were cursed with parvenu instincts, life would be intolerable. The parvenu, like the snob, is secretly ashamed of himself. To this we must attribute his adoration of social customs most remote from those which produced him. And to this is to be traced the motive that impels the American painter to imitate the latest European fashions rather than attempt to deal with local materials. He has been taught by the snobs who dominate the art schools that Europe offers the standard of values. In terms of technic this is obviously the case; for there is no classic American art. But he is taught nothing of the foundations of technic, nothing of its true nature as an acquired and developed habit dealing with and modified by human meanings and local environments. He is taught only to imitate—to duplicate externals. A sensible historical view would show the student how the objective facts of art are conditioned by the varieties of social pressure; whereupon form, as an *activity,* would emerge and separate itself from form as an isolated object.

Art, to the creator, is not a finished article but an activity, not a commodity but a continuous labor. To the parvenu and his backers it is something else: the badge of a higher caste, or refined merchandise. To the dealer and collector it is an investment, a negotiable object, and by the etiquette of display, a precious object. Inasmuch as the standard of the fine and precious is erected on scarcity values, it happens that common realities can have no value unless sanctified by time and distance. Cézanne, for example, one of the homeliest and earthiest of painters, during his lifetime was the most despised of men, an utterly worthless artist and an object of contempt in the refined circles of Paris. But to-day he is a valuable painter—a rare Old Master. He has, you see, by the connivance of critics and dealers, become sanctified, and extraordinarily high priced, and acceptable to the society that once howled him down. To-day the basis of appraisal is so corrupt and disingenuous that the value of contemporary art is gauged by its similarity to objects which, being rare and precious, are coveted by people of sudden refinement. Thus original contemporary forms are ruled out of parvenu society.

American art, in all probability, will continue to be a branch of the occidental tradition. Technically and psychologically, it derives from European schools just as modern European art derives from the old art of Italy. The wise painter, aware that a mastery of procedures is his first concern, cannot afford to neglect his forerunners. In the formation of the basic habits of his craft and in the forging

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of new tools and methods, he must draw upon his vast European inheritance. An extensive and thorough investigation of past methods would tend to check the formation of facile technical habits, enable him to avoid fashionable snares and makeshifts, and to measure the psychology underlying current interests. Our art schools should be purged of academic rot, classic and modern. There is too much talk about Art—the sanctified, precious property of collectors and parvenus. What should be taught is the practice of art, its history and psychology—the development of forms as moulded and conditioned by the mental habits of the painter and his environment. Art can take care of itself: it has always done so in spite of academies.

In the United States we enter a new background for the growth of art, and in one respect a unique background. The American is born and bred with no cultural memories in his heart. He is the child of a civilization in which things are built for service, to be scrapped and replaced by more efficient models when the day of their usefulness is over. It follows that he cannot, unless he is a parvenu, be expected to practise art for art's sake, or beauty's sake, or for the sake of any abstraction whatever. But it does not follow that he is left with nothing to paint, and that he must go to Europe for his inspiration. To the genuine artist America holds an unprecedented variety of experiences, an untilled field of overwhelming richness. The spirit of the frontier, with its semi-barbaric morality and lawlessness, is fused and intermingled with the most complicated industrial technology in the history of the human race. The result is that man everywhere, but particularly in the industrial centres, has become a curiously original and alert organism. Men make machines and machines make men; and the interaction of the two, in specific environments, has evolved a psychological state and a background that are uniquely American. It is the painter's business to provide an appropriate form for this curious condition. To accomplish the task he must have first-hand knowledge, the *knowing* of things, common knowledge born of experience and sustained by observation and habitual intimacy. For the things we have observed closely and are driven to express by interest, curiosity, appreciation, or love, will assume their unique form and character, provided our mental habits have not hardened into inflexible conventions.

There are, at present, American painters who, by trial and error under the stress of genuine interests, are recasting their habits and producing evidence of new forms. But they are few and far between, and assuredly not popular. The majority are content to copy the current mannerisms of Europe, and to sell their souls to international dealers. It is true, I suppose, that in the course of human events, the American environment and its psychology which are happily absorbing the best energies of our historians, critics, and novelists, will capture the interest of our painters and force them into useful activity. But this, I fear, will not occur until the interest has become an ingrained habit, a natural approach to native subject-matter. The love of art, no matter how sincere or profound, will not suffice. As perfect illustrations of the ineffectualness of the love of art as a stimulus to new forms I may cite the art colonies at Woodstock, Provincetown, and Santa Fé. Working in typically American—in unique—environments, but working with costive adoration for European forms and without organic interest in their subjects, our painters produce only imitations. Even the local color escapes them. The American scene is perverted into a technical pattern. Instead of surrendering to the scene and allowing it to modify the pattern, our wilful zealots impose an imported pattern on indigenous materials, with the result that pictures of the deserts of New Mexico resemble, for the most part, the Provençal landscape of Cézanne, or extracts from the Cubism of Paris.

It is not enough that the painter, equipped with a technical apparatus manufactured in Europe, should sit before an object and record it in the manner of the camera. Art is not merely communication through a given instrument. The creative act consists, first, in the discovery of the situation to be experienced, and second, in the discovery, or invention, of the appropriate expressive instrument —the form which, by reason of its unique qualities, shall be equivalent to the special characteristics of the situation. When life, American life, develops in painters interests stronger than the interests aroused by canonized art, we may hope for a native American school. Art cannot continue to feed upon itself and command the respect or the indulgence of the American public.

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Moving Toward Monopoly

By Lawrence M. Hughes

Amazing figures on the growth of central control in this country, and the individuals behind the scenes who have fostered it. Will the future course of monopoly in this country be private capitalism or state socialism?

THE trend of economic enterprise is toward monopoly. Whatever the immediate causes, whatever the motives or ability of those who are seeking to advance or retard it, the trend moves on. Born of machinery and bred by capital, it is being fostered by every new development of finance, of research and manufacture, of transportation and communication. It is being hastened by competition and by the casualties which have resulted. It is being brought to maturity by the concentration of tremendous power and resources in a few able hands, aided by planning and organizing genius greater than the world has ever known.

The trend appears to-day in two distinct forms: the one, exemplified by the United States, in the concentration of wealth in private hands; the other in the principle of "state capitalism" and co-operative enterprise now being carried forward by Russia.

In spite of wide differences in the aims, in the number and the degree of the beneficiaries of the two forms, there is a striking parallel between the methods employed. Like the United States, Russia to-day is in a period of transition from an agricultural to an industrial nation. To bind its "Union" of 159,000,000 people more closely together, to enable these people to work more effectually toward the fulfilment of its Five-Year Plan and toward other "plans" that will follow, Russia is employing many of the mechanical methods responsible for, and even some of the companies who have achieved, the measure of monopoly here. Although the element of private profit is eliminated, the element of state profit is emphasized. A dictatorship leads and sometimes drives the masses of the people as completely as if the rulers were to become millionaires in the process.

The fact that Russia is less "developed" than the United States is in its favor. Russia to-day is underindustrialized; its greatest immediate problem is one of production. Given the capital and the organizing ability (it has already the resources and the market), there is work for all and gradual improvement in the individual "standards of living." In the United States, on the other hand, we are surfeited with productive and distributive capacity—glutted with goods and, as a nation, even with money. The difficulty here lies in the fact that the goods and the money are controlled by a few who have far more than they can use; and many of the rest, lacking these things, are thrown out of work and into poverty.

This article is an endeavor to trace the trend toward monopoly here.

The present economic depression has revealed the extent to which the competitive system has failed to provide even a living income for the great majority of our enterprises and for the people they are supposed to support. It has helped the larger and stronger groups to come more aggressively to the fore.

"In modern business," said the chief executive of the largest oil company in the world, "the small producer cannot exist." Regardless of certain abortive attempts to *create* monopolies, regardless of clamor against them, the trend continues. Errors and argument alike cannot stay it.

Thus we find that, although the nation's wealth almost doubled, its population increased about 15 per cent and the value of its manufactured output rose from 24 to 68 billion dollars, or nearly 200 per cent, in the thirteen years from 1914 to 1927, the number of industrial establishments declined from 272,402 to 191,866, or about one-third. Of all sixteen groups analyzed by the Bureau of the Census only four had definitely more establishments at the end of this period.

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Of some 900 "makes" of automobiles that have appeared in America in the last thirty years, less than 50 are being actively marketed to-day, 2 are doing 75 per cent of the total unit volume and 2 companies two-thirds of the dollar volume. Of nearly 300 tire companies in 1919 only 25 still function as separate organizations, only a half dozen are operating at a profit and 1 has grown so large as to be able to supply, alone, all reasonable demands of the market. Of 180 airplane companies in the United States in 1930, one did 25 per cent of the total business. One company does 40 per cent, three 78 per cent of the business of the American soap industry. Ninety-five per cent of the nearly 120,000,000,000 cigarettes made in the United States are of four brands and one of these alone makes about 36 per cent of the total sales (the manufacturer's volume in this product being more than $250,000,000). One of more than 1,200 telephone companies does 90 per cent of the entire business; another company sells more than 50 per cent of the steel, a third nearly all of the aluminum. One coordinated group handles half the oil in the world.

In the manufacture and sale of products as varied as farm implements and radios, cash-registers and yeast, cameras and electrical appliances, chemicals and coffee, proprietary medicines and mattresses, roofing materials and biscuits, soft drinks and cheese, a single brand, a single company or a single closely knit group is definitely dominant. And certain of these and others, through merger or agreement, through interlocking directorates, jointly controlled subsidiaries or identical financial sponsorship, have been able to extend their influence beyond their original fields of operations. Thus they are now "supercorporations." As their grip tightens, they may soon become "supermonopolies."

If retailing has not gone so far toward monopoly as manufacturing, it is due to the fact that stores are still largely organizations of neighborhood service. They are more numerous and, in a sense, more diversified. Although there are less than 200,000 industrial establishments, there are still about 1,200,000 stores, with sales volumes ranging from $100,000,000 to less than $2,500 a year. . . . The chain movement, however, is gaining steadily. Of some 400,000 grocery stores, 60,000 are now members of centrally controlled chains, and about an equal number of voluntary chains, or associations of independent merchants for group buying, branding and sometimes manufacturing. The chains' proportion of the 57,000 drug-stores is even higher. In all convenience merchandise, centrally controlled chains are now doing more than 20 per cent of the total business. One of these, of 16,000 units, has an annual volume of $1,000,000,000, a figure normally surpassed by only four manufacturers.

Control of the various functions of manufacturing, distributing, and retailing is an important phase of the trend. The larger oil companies have gone further, probably, than any of the others—pumping the oil from their own wells, refining it by their own patented processes in their own plants and selling it to the ultimate consumer at their own service stations—usually shipping both the crude and refined product in their own pipe-lines, tank-cars, vessels and motor-trucks. The many steps in the process may take the product two-thirds of the way around the world, but it never leaves the original hands.

Many large distributers and retailers are reversing the process and entering manufacture. The large grocery chains, for example, bake their own bread, evaporate their own milk, roast their own coffee. . . . Of its own brands of coffee the largest grocery chain sells 200,000,000 pounds, about four times the volume of the largest exclusive manufacturer, and all of this volume is done in its own stores.

From the success of these operations it would appear that there is an economic and perhaps a social justification for larger and more highly integrated economic groups. Surely with mass production and mass distribution—with buying, handling and inventory charges cut all along the line—the semimonopoly, if it will, can reduce prices and even standardize quality in the process. The smaller concern, on the other hand, must pay an increasingly heavy toll for the privilege of remaining in business. It has been estimated that sixty cents of every dollar now paid by the consumer goes to pay the cost of "distribution." Of the present retail volume of the country of about $53,000,000,000, about $30,000,000,000 is devoted to paying the profit of manufacturer, broker, sales agent, jobber, retailer, and whomever, and to physical handling charges. It also includes salesmen's salaries and bonuses and some $1,500,000,000 for advertising. The larger company, especially the integrated and direct-to-consumer company, can reduce or eliminate some of these operations. Thus a number of large manufacturers are able to thrive on a profit

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margin of only six to eight cents on the sales dollar; certain chains on only two or three; while independents must exact a much higher toll.

The concentration of wealth and power in individual hands has increased at an even faster rate than the concentration and integration of industry and distribution. Of the nation's total wealth of about $350,000,000,000, it is estimated that 50 per cent is held by but one-third of 1 per cent of the population; 80 per cent by only one-fifth of the whole. Tax returns showed that 26 persons had incomes of $5,000,000 or more and 511 incomes of $1,000,000 or more in 1928, nearly twice as many as the 290 reported in the previous year. In ten years the number of men with incomes of more than $1,000,000 has been multiplied by fifteen.

The fact that American economic enterprises now have perhaps 15,000,000 stockholders has not affected this concentration. The more stockholders there are the easier it is for the "inside group" to retain direction and control. The large stockholder need not own or even personally control a majority of stock in order to lead in formulating policies and in supervising their execution.

Small stockholders, because of their number and diversity, because of their distance from the scene of decisions, because they are either uninformed or, if informed, often incapable of understanding the complicated reports and outlines of policies and projects sent to them, because they must remain individually small and remote factors in these vast institutions, can be herded hither and yon or largely ignored by those in charge. As stockholders they have only the power to sell their shares, often at a loss, or to concur.

This situation is not so unfair as it might appear. Economic enterprise must have leadership. So long as the stock holds up and dividends are paid regularly, the small stockholders have no reason to complain. Many of them, unfortunately, have wholly a financial concern in the companies in which they invest. They are merely petty gamblers, seeking ways of getting more than a savings-bank or insurance return on their money and being none too careful to investigate either the essential stability of their organizations or the ethics of their undertakings.

In addition to providing capital, however, the "participation" of many stockholders is effective in other ways. With employees and others directly or indirectly connected they form a strong nucleus of a market. Whether or not these people are actually "loyal," they will usually buy their company's products, when they can, in order to stimulate its business. In fact, the company may "suggest" this to them.

Their hold upon employees is even stronger. Not only do the workers and their families depend upon the companies for their subsistence (a subsistence all too precarious just now with 7,500,000 people out of work, and seeking to underbid the others for their jobs), but in many industrial communities the companies own the homes, the hotels, the stores, the banks, and the theatres. In these "company towns," often isolated, the employee must live and supply almost all his needs; thus enabling the company to make further profit from his rent, his purchases of food and clothing and amusements and whatever—even from the surplus in his bank-account.

The most interesting "family" in American industry is perhaps the leading motor corporation. Its sales and profits are now the largest of any industrial concern in the world. Its products are diversified; they comprise motor-cars, materials, parts and appliances, electrical and gas appliances for the home, the office and the farm, radios and refrigerators, airplanes and air transportation and many others. In addition to 315,000 stockholders and 200,000 direct employees, 500,000 other men and women are employed by its dealers and perhaps 250,000 more in supplying its needs. With their families this group numbers about 5,000,000. Thus in the capital, the labor, and the consumption of these affiliated millions the corporation has an effective vanguard in the battle for the world market, and its "sponsors" have a dependable aid in stabilizing their own investment and in insuring their continued wealth and power.

For all its errors and abuses, Wall Street has done well its work of concentration. Organizations worth millions of dollars, each with hundreds of thousands of employees and stockholders, are being sold by a handful of men across a conference table. Even the presidents and chairmen of many of these large companies are to-day but appointees of Wall Street—to be hired and fired and switched about like clerks or office boys at the whim or discretion

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of those still higher. When a former American ambassador issued recently a list of sixty-four economic "rulers" of America, he presented some impressive names and provoked a lot of discussion. Despite their power and prominence, however, the list was far too long. Our economic government is not oligarchic, it is more nearly monarchic. There are not sixty-four "rulers" of America, there are only a very few. In fact two names today loom larger probably than all the other sixty-two combined. These names are J. Pierpont Morgan and John D. Rockefeller.

Strictly speaking, it is not Morgan and Rockefeller who rule, but the "groups" of which they are the heads; but in the groups these men are outstanding. Morgan rules as an organizer and banker, Rockefeller as a stockholder. Of the two, Rockefeller has more wealth, Morgan more power.

There are in the United States to-day some twenty concerns with assets each of more than $1,000,000,000. The largest of these is American Telephone & Telegraph Company, the assets of which are more than $5,000,000,000. The list is varied. In it are Metropolitan Life, Chase and National City banks, United States Steel and Pennsylvania Railroad, New York and Equitable Life, Guaranty Trust Company, Standard Oil of New Jersey and the recently authorized Socony Vacuum, Inc., Cities Service, Standard Gas and Electric, Electric Bond and Share, North American Company and United Corporation (utility holding companies), General Motors, and New York Central, Baltimore and Ohio, Santa Fe, Southern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads. The insurance companies, owned by their policyholders, are more "socialistic" than the others. So, too, in a sense, is American Telephone, in which no stockholder has more than 1 per cent of the total shares. In all the others, however, Wall Street and usually the House of Morgan play a prominent rôle.

In sales the "billion-dollar list" is smaller but no less important. Among its members are American Telephone, General and Ford motors, Standard of New Jersey, United States Steel, Metropolitan and New York Life, and the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, largest retailer. Ford is wholly, A. & P. primarily, a family concern—Ford being owned outright by Henry, Mrs. Henry, and Edsel Ford; and more than half of the stock in A. & P. being held by the two brothers and three sisters Hartford, the sons and daughters of the man who founded the chain seventy-three years ago. . . . Of the three largest "industrials" in this group, however, it is noteworthy that the elder Morgan backed the organization of United States Steel and the present head of the house General Motors. Although Morgan and Rockefeller have not worked closely together, Morgan has handled some financing for Rockefeller's Standard of New Jersey, and Rockefeller is a large stockholder in several Morgan enterprises, including United States Steel.

It has been estimated that the House of Morgan is represented on the directorates of seventy-nine corporations with aggregate capitalization of $20,000,000,000 and assets considerably larger. The house sponsored or is represented in American Telephone, New York Central, Bankers and Guaranty Trust companies. Morgan has recently succeeded in breaking into the Kuhn, Loeb control of the Pennsylvania, largest railroad company of the United States; he is also backing the Van Sweringens in their railroad system which now extends from New York to Salt Lake City, and through an affiliation with a "Rockefeller" line to San Francisco. Thus Morgan is not only completing the first transcontinental railroad but is an active power in three of the four lines which President Hoover has selected to gather in under their expansive wings all the other Eastern roads. The House of Morgan is at work in a wide variety of enterprises throughout the world. Among American concerns its list includes Johns-Manville Corporation, prominent in the building industry; General Electric and its affiliated Radio Corporation of America, International Telephone & Telegraph, of which Postal Telegraph is the central unit, National Biscuit, Kennecott Copper, Standard Brands, a recent food combination, United Corporation, du Pont, International Mercantile Marine, Montgomery Ward, Associated Dry Goods, Continental Oil, Niagara Hudson Power, and Consolidated Gas, now being brought together under its auspices, and many more. The Rockefeller interests also are diversified. Rockefeller, the investor, probably has made more money from other economic enterprises than he and his father have ever made from oil. In addition to about a 20-per-cent interest in the four largest members of Standard Oil (the assets of

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these four are about $4,500,000,000, making the value of the Rockefeller holdings in this group alone worth nearly $1,000,000,000), he is an important factor in United States Steel, Pennsylvania, New York Central, Santa Fe, Union Pacific, and Western Pacific railroads, International Harvester, and Chase National Bank.

Because of the extent of his philanthropies and the scope and subtlety of his promotion, Rockefeller, the man, is better known than Morgan to the public and perhaps has wider influence among them. Morgan, however, although even further in the background so far as the public are concerned, probably exercises more complete control. He is also more actively the ruler. Rockefeller appears personally on no board of directors. Morgan, in contrast, functions as chairman of United States Steel, as a director of International Mercantile Marine. He is actively the controlling force in others. In almost every important economic field there is a "Morgan" company dominant or reaching toward it. There are evidences of "relations" between some of them. "Pyramiding" and the establishment of "trusts" and "holding companies" permit separate identities and wide public participation and yet enable Morgan to continue and strengthen his rule. Morgan initiates. Morgan brings these vast members together. And thus, not so much through wealth as through strategy and organization, Morgan prevails.

It has been customary in many quarters to blame these men, the brothers Mellon, and others, for the extent of their wealth and power. In one sense they should be blamed. They have sought to create monopolies, to exercise complete dominion over important economic functions, by methods not always to be condoned. And yet their greed has been no greater, nor their ethics worse, than that of less successful men. After all, what is achievement under a competitive system but the ability to defeat, to acquire and then to co-ordinate for personal gain? These men have been criticised largely because they have succeeded where others have failed. They would not have been so successful were it not for the intensity of competition and the unscrupulousness with which enterprises, large and small, in the name of competition, have exploited the worker, the small stockholder and the public.

"Free competition" has ever been a golden oratorical opportunity for political candidates and office-holders. But in the rhetorical fireworks concerning the iniquities of Big Business the shortcomings of a system which has caused so much suffering and death among little businesses have been ignored. The control of production, the elimination of waste of resources, the curbing of high-pressure financing and salesmanship—crimes of which the majority of all businesses have been guilty—have been left out of the discussion. To attempt collectively to secure some assurance that workers might have living wages and steady employment, stockholders reasonable values, *entrepreneurs* a just return for their efforts, and the public no longer be coerced and impoverished by a tax of countless billions of dollars for distribution and profit—*this* was unthinkable. It was Socialism or Bolshevism or Fascism or whatever, and all equally to be deplored.

The government has brought Trusts to the bar as the root of all evil. It fined Standard Oil $29,000,000. The action was just. But in so doing and in breaking up the Oil Trust into more than thirty competitive parts and encouraging hundreds of other competitors, it imposed upon the public the burden of paying the costs of many times as many competitors as could profitably be operated. The government divorced the Baltimore & Ohio from the Pennsylvania, the Southern Pacific from the Union Pacific, and the coal-mines from the railroads; split up the Tobacco Trust, the Sugar Trust, only to find that "free competition" killed many of the parts and forced many others to recombine, usually beneath the surface, with the public putting up the money for them to duplicate facilities already ample, and to make other expensive gestures of independence. It has created Interstate Commerce and Federal Trade commissions to aid the Department of Justice in seeking out these offenders, and the public are taxed again for bureaucracy.

To-day, however, rendered somewhat sane by the depression, it appears that the government is not unanimous in this programme. Certain leaders are beginning to see that the trend toward monopoly goes forward in spite of everything that is said and done to stop it. They are beginning to realize that ultimate monopoly appears to be in-

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evitable. President Hoover has said that, "in the light of modern conditions," the anti-trust laws should be modified. He has endeavored to practise what he preached by sponsoring the "four-party" realignment of Eastern railroads and by urging that railroads be permitted to reacquire coal properties and to market their output. He has done this in part perhaps because of "pressure" from Wall Street. But as a business man and a social worker he must recognize also the futility of unrestrained competition and the economic, political, and social justification for supervised monopoly, at least of the necessities of life.

A number of other prominent men and organizations are now thinking and working along this line. The Chamber of Commerce of the United States and the National Industrial Conference Board are seeking to develop methods of co-operative control of production—steps which two and a half years ago might have been looked upon as directly in restraint of trade. Members of agricultural, lumber, oil, and mining industries are striving collectively not merely to eliminate the ill effects of unrestrained and irresponsible competition but to prevent waste of natural resources. Manufacturers also have taken up the problem. A number of automobile companies, for example, have agreed to introduce new models only once a year, in the winter, when production and sales are at a low ebb and the transition can be made with fewer ill effects to all concerned.

But in spite of these heartening instances of voluntary co-operation, so long as the individual manufacturer or retailer is, within legal limits, the sole judge of his own conduct; so long as he is, within competitive limits, the sole arbiter of his own destiny and, in an increasing measure, of the destiny of those whom he employs and to whom he sells his products, the present condition may be expected to continue. Although on occasion certain members of an industry have worked together, they have done so primarily to outwit other competitors in their own and in outside industries. They have also contrived jointly to get workers, always paid as little as possible, at still lower wages. They have agreed to raise prices, to cheapen product, to change styles and models and otherwise induce "obsolescence" in order to bleed the public still harder. Whether blind, or willingly unscrupulous, or driven along by forces beyond their control, the fact remains that they have failed both to realize their interdependence with these other important factors in our economic life and to shoulder collectively their responsibility toward them. In thus breaking down the morale of labor and in undermining and alienating the markets they were created to serve, they have hurt themselves as well.

Wherever the fault lies, the problem must be solved. The trend toward monopoly is helping in the solution; but it is pushing forward to-day across battle-fields strewn with the dead and the dying.

In basic industries at least—in those industries which deal in the necessities of life—it would seem desirable that the government, as the representative alike of capital, labor and the people as a whole, should step in and bring these recalcitrant forces into line; and perhaps endeavor to speed the trend toward monopoly. Such governmental supervision, however, should not be confused with the granting of further subsidies. In the present high tariff, in the Farm Board and other agencies, there is too much official paternalism now. It is purely a matter of intelligent and co-ordinated planning and control.

Monopoly, of itself, it should be emphasized, is not an evil. It becomes an evil only when it empowers a few to profit extortionately at the expense of the many. And one characteristic of the trend itself would be helpful in such a programme: the diminishing number of strong companies would make supervision simpler. The responsibility could be placed more definitely.

It is true that the establishment of monopolies in certain basic industries would mean the employment of fewer workers. But at least a more complete and far-sighted control, both within the industry and by the government, could assure for the remaining employees regular work and perhaps fewer working hours, and, because the costs of competition have been largely eliminated, better wages. It could give the stockholders a dependable return. Thus in the larger income and greater spending inclination, ability and time of these millions whose livelihood has been assured by monopoly, there would come a tremendous stimulus to other industries and to the steady and profitable employment of those who have been thrown out of work in the advancement of the trend. Thus the supervision of monopoly of basic economic functions, by the people themselves, could be made a stabilizing and a beneficent force.

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LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

The fourteenth and fifteenth of the true narratives selected in the $1,500 contest. "Finding of Domicile" is not life in the United States but is the true story of two Americans seeking freedom abroad, and therefore eligible.

Old Billy Hell

By Daniel M. Garrison

"Said the toolie to the driller,
'Will you dance me a little jig?'
'Yes, by God, if it tears down the rig.'
So they opened up the throttle, and they come out the hole
And danced a double shuffle 'round a ten-inch hole."

SEMINOLE, the little city in the heart of the largest oil-field in the world. Seminole, a dirty, haphazardly built little city. Cot houses, hotels, restaurants, chili joints, clothing stores, pawnshops, supply houses, moving-picture theatres, dance halls; one-story buildings with brick faces and wooden backs.

The people, mad creatures seeking quick wealth. Oil men from Pennsylvania, Illinois, West Virginia. Farmers from Missouri, Arkansas, Texas. Farmers in big hats, patched overalls, heavy shoes. They huddled in groups talking about farm conditions, jobs in the oil-fields, the weather.

"Thar ain't no money in farming. All them big monkeys with them new-fangled machines takes all the money. We ain't got no chance."

"Just blowed in; how's work in these parts?"

"Tol'able."

Tramps, the free Americans, shabby and unshaven. High-school boys in loud wide-striped trousers, colored shirts. Supply clerks with riding-boots, whip-cord breeches, chamois wind-breakers. In the restaurants were Greeks; in the clothing stores, Jews.

On a corner sat a beggar with one leg, a few cheap pencils and a tin cup. A blind haggish-looking woman pushed her way through the crowd, singing Pentecostal hymns. A little ragged, barefoot boy held one of her hands; in the other hand she carried a bunch of tissue-paper roses—red, green, blue, yellow tissue-paper roses covered with wax.

Many women walked the streets, painted women, highly scented women.

Money-mad men, pimps, bootleggers, dope-heads, hijackers, dumb laborers, corrupt "laws." Seminole, the miracle city, an unholy miracle. The sidewalks were stained with tobacco-juice. The streets lined with thousands of automobiles. People lived in little one-room shacks and drove around in automobiles.

Wild Indians there were none; only big-bellied, soft, flabby, useless, lazy red men, standing silently on the streets, staring like dumb animals. Money and civilization had deteriorated their bodies.

Seminole. Ignorant, profane, uncultured, lovable laborers of the earth. Aimlessly they walked the streets, spitting their tobacco-juice, picking their teeth, swearing, whooping, flirting, fighting. Laborers, horses, rigs, tanks, shacks, trucks, crude laughter, loud curses—seldom a tear. Oil. Seminole, the miracle city, an unholy miracle, performed by the trickster—Lucifer.

"Wahl, I'll be clawed by wild cats, chawed by wild hogs and everlastingly damned, if it ain't old Lum."

"Howdy, Deep Hole."

"What in old Billy Hell are you doing?"

"Doing without, mostly."

"Ain't you working?"

"Yeh, pipelining for the Indian State."

"The Indian State? Why, I'm drilling for them out on the Witty Thomas lease."

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"Sure enough?"

"We'll hit the pay in a couple of days."

"How deep are you now?"

"We're in the lime, 'bout thirty-nine hundred."

"Will she be a good hole?"

"Ain't no reason why she shouldn't pay; the other three wells on the lease come in better than four thousand barrel."

"Old man Thomas is making plenty of dough, ain't he?"

"Yeh, he's a lucky nigger."

"A nigger?"

"Yeh, ain't you heard 'bout Witty Thomas?"

"Naw, I ain't never heard. What about him?"

"You ain't going no place?"

"Naw, just lousing around."

"What kind of chewing you got?"

"Mail Pouch."

"Good."

"All them niggers is getting rich around here."

"Witty's got plenty money, prob'ly millions."

"Just an ignorant old nigger, huh?"

"Yeh, his old man was a slave to a tribe of them Indians, and after the war the government frees them and gives them each forty acres of land and a mule. It's that forty that Witty made his pile on. The land ain't worth much, just red clay and a lot of sand. Witty raised a little cotton and had a bunch of them pecan trees. He was just making a sparse living, and that ain't hardly nothing when you're talking 'bout niggers, 'cause they don't never overload their bellies, that's why they're all so healthy.

"Wahl, sir, when they hit oil here in Seminole all them rich monkeys from all them big cities stampeded in here like a herd of wild buffaloes. Man, you ain't never seen the like of it. Worser'n Smackover. Men, women and hard tails eating and flopping wherever they could find a place. I slept in a tent with my bud and every night, whether we asked them or not, a couple of gals would elbow us in the guts and say, 'Move over, make room for a lady.' Yes, sir, it was something. I've seen these streets of Seminole so plomb full of folks you couldn't spit without splattering somebody. And mud! I hope to tell you. I seen hard tails just disappear right in the middle of that street. Took twenty to thirty head of mules to haul a pot, one of them small boilers, from the flat car to the location. I seen a truck loaded with rig irons start across the Rock Island tracks going to Bowlegs and go up to its radiator cap in mud. Another truck come along and tried to pull him out and it got stuck, and another truck come along and it got stuck, and still another, and still another. I ain't alying to you, Lum, there was seven trucks stuck in that one hole, right there by nigger town, and them trucks stayed there for three days before they could get them out. And I'm a suck-egg mule if a dumb hossier didn't get drowned cutting across the street. Mister, it was old Billy Hell, his old woman and all his kids."

"Where was Witty Thomas when all this was going on?"

"That's what I'm telling you. Witty had one of them leases that them big men wanted."

"Them big men wanted to buy the land off of him?"

"Yeh, that's what I'm going to tell you about. Wahl, sir, one of them lease men come to Witty and told him he would give him a lot of dough, thousands of dollars, if Witty would lease him his land. It was 'way up in the thousands of dollars, but Witty shook his big old woolly head, like a dumb jack with flies on a sore, and said, 'No, suh; no, suh.' Then the lease man offered him more dough but Witty just said, 'No, suh; no, suh.' Wahl, this old boy was as smart as a whip and he kinda figured out that Witty don't know nothing about big money, so he offered that crazy nigger several hundred dollars, and I'm a dirty bum if Witty, with a big smile covering the whole of his ugly face, don't say, 'Yes, suh; yes, suh.' That shows you how dumb some of these natives are."

"So old Witty got sucked under?"

"No. You see, the government or somebody picks a guardian to kinda look after them ignorant people, the niggers and the Indians, so Witty only gets robbed out of the dough the guardian took, which ain't nothing just to sniff at. But Witty he still had millions left; that is, after they had got oil on his land. You see, them oil companies that drill them holes got to pay the folks that own the lease one-eighth of all the production they get, and Witty has already got three wells on his forty, all of them big-paying wells.

"Wahl, sir, all kinda salesmen flocked in to see Witty, you know, trying to make him buy a whole

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lot of stuff. But Witty he wasn't use to having nothing, so he don't buy nothing, 'cept a big tombstone for his first wife and a big car."

"What kinda car?"

"A big high-powered Lincoln."

"I'd of bought some of them Cadillacs."

"Wahl, you see, Witty, he wasn't going to buy no kinda car, but one of them salesmen tells him he owed it to President Lincoln who freed him and give him that forty with all that oil under it, to say nothing of the mule. He tells him old man Lincoln's son is selling them cars and he is a poor man and just barely making a living. So Witty bought a Lincoln and it is still setting up in his barn."

"Don't he use it?"

"Naw, he don't know how. I sees him every day setting up in an old wagon driving a pair of hard tails. And I sees his old woman washing the clothes out in the back yard. It's funny-like seeing that big brand-new Lincoln setting up there in that old patched-up barn and then look over back of their dirty old shack and see Witty's old woman leaning over a washboard scrubbing Witty's long-handle draws. Them doing the like of that with all that dough. That ain't common sense, is it, Lum?"

"If I had a sight of dough, I'd get me a fancy-looking car, a good-looking slut and a gallon of corn and just take out."

"Where would you go?"

"Why worry about that? It wouldn't make me no mind where I went as long as I could get my whiskey."

"Lum, you knows how I use to drink? Wahl, sir, I ain't touched a drop for six months."

"Swore off?"

"Yeh."

"That ain't nothing to do. I swore off three times in one night."

"No, sir, I ain't touched a drop. The last time I got drunk I had myself an accident I ain't never forgot. I was boarding down at the Radcliff Hotel. You knows that forty-room boarding-house on Evans Street?"

"Yeh, Juanita use to live there."

"Wahl, sir, every night I gets drunk; what I mean, running, stumbling, blind drunk. I wasn't doing nothing at the time, just lousing around waiting for a drilling job on a new location they was putting in.

"Wahl, sir, one morning I gets up 'bout ten o'clock; yes, sir, ten o'clock. It was the first time I hadn't been up by six in God knows when. I knew right then there was something wrong somewhere. Anyhow, I gets up and mopes over to the kitchen, all the time acalling old lady Radcliff to come and get me my breakfast. But old lady Radcliff she ain't to be found, she'd gone to town, so I decided I'd get my own garbage.

"Wahl, sir, I starts messing 'round in the kitchen trying to find something fit for a man to eat when I see a bunch of them cereal boxes up on a shelf, a big bunch of them, all kinds. I stands there a few minutes looking at all them boxes of cereal, trying to figure out what one I wanted, but my head was too rum-dumb to do any figuring, so I says to myself, 'Hell!' and just reaches up and takes any old one and pours out a big bowlful.

"After I et I walked in the front room and looked for the morning paper but couldn't find none. Then I starts looking 'round the room for something to take my mind off my feelings but there wasn't nothing, only some old magazines and some lousy pictures. So I decided I'd go back in the kitchen and eat another bowl of cereal. I was just about to the kitchen door when I sees by the window in the hall a cage with one of them yellow birds in it, so I goes over and looks at it. I hate to talk 'bout the dead, but, Hell! there in a white-looking trough was the same kind of cereal I just et."

"Huh?"

"I'll take a paralyzed oath if it wasn't the same stuff."

"You et them birdseeds?"

"Yes, sir! and I ain't taken a drop since, no, sir, not a drop. When a man gets that rum-dumb he needs his head gone over with a good club, that's what he needs. Mister, that was old Billy Hell, hisself."

"When I run across you, Deep Hole, I was headed for a snort."

"Wahl, I'll just walk down that a way with you."

"I ain't going to tempt you, Deep Hole; no, I ain't."

"I was just going for the walk."

"I was just kidding you. I ain't got a crying dime."

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"You ain't kidding me, son; I ain't taking no drink from nobody."

"Ain't you never going to drink no more?"

"Wahl, I'll tell you. After I gets Witty's well finished, I might throw a big one, but not before."

"Witty ought to give you a gallon."

"Not that tight nigger. Do you know, Lum, when they was drilling them first wells on his lease the boys didn't have no drinking-water, so they goes over to Witty's water well, which was back of his shack, and pumps out a canful. And do you know what Witty does? He comes moping out of the shack and stops the boys. He wanted them to pay fifteen cents a day for the water; mind you, fifteen cents a day. He said they was apaying him for the oil that was acoming out of them big wells, so why shouldn't they pay him for the water that was acoming out of his water well. Ain't that something? With all his dough he tried to charge them boys that was agetting the oil out of the ground for him fifteen cents a day for drinking-water."

"Did they pay him?"

"Why, hell, no! They just told him what Christ told John and walked off with the can of water. Lum, why is it when folks make a heap of money they gets a kind of fever, a money fever, that creeps right up under their hide and they gets acraving more money? They're just like a dopey, they'll do anything to get more money. It makes it old Billy Hell for us monkeys who're always spending our dough, 'cause pretty dang soon they'll have it all and we won't have none to squander. Why are folks like that?"

"Deep Hole, you seen chickens with all the feathers picked off of them. Wahl, some folks are just like that; they're measly-looking and needs a lot of feathers to make them look like something. Only folks that needs something to make them look like something tries to grab up all the money so they can get something to look like something. See what I mean?"

"Yeh, I see. That's why some folks have fancy clothes and houses and cars and all that showy stuff. They ain't worth a goddamn just by themselves."

"Sure, sure, that's it. If they was they wouldn't be atrying to get that showy stuff."

"I have a toolie aworking for me that ain't worth nothing. I do more work accidentally than he does apurpose. Of an evening he gets all spruced up in a hand-me-down suit, a fancy tie and a big white hat. Yes, sir, all fussed up, and that ain't all; he wears them pink silk drawers and shirts, like them sows wear, and keeps his hair all slicked back with grease. If he ain't a sight! He calls it being refined, and I calls it plain old loco. But come to think about it, I guess he needs all them fittings 'cause he ain't by his-self worth a fiddler's bitch."

"Why don't you run him off?"

"I ain't the one who hired him; besides, his old man has got a stroke with the company. Big stockholder or something."

"Do you make it hard on him?"

"I keep him busy, plenty busy, but I ain't hard on him. No, sir, I ain't hard on him. It ain't right, it ain't right. I know, 'cause I've worked under men that ain't got no feelings for no one."

"I'm working for one of them no-good monkeys now."

"Lum, you've heard tell of Swivel-neck Baird?"

"Naw."

"You ain't never heard of Swivel-neck Baird, that old rotary driller that brought in most of the big wells; what I mean big wells, here in Seminole Field?"

"Sure, I guess I have. What about him?"

"Wahl, sir, I dressed tools for old Swivel-neck for four days, and that's a record that ain't been beaten by many. The hardest bastard I've ever worked for, barring none. Nobody could get along with him; he couldn't get along with his-self. He was just naturally ornery. And ugly! By God, he had a face that would stop a Chinese funeral! One day the boss come to me and said, 'Deep Hole, you go out and dress tools for Swivel-neck, and for pete's sake don't cross the old man 'cause we've got to get that hole drilled.' Then he told me how Swivel-neck had fired five toolies already 'cause they talked too much. So I went out and worked four tours; just did my work and said nothing. Wahl, sir, Swivel-neck and me got along fine; he'd point out different things to do and I'd do them.

"On the fourth evening we was just adrilling away when I happened to look up at the sky and saw a storm acoming. I was for shutting her down, knowing that it ain't good judgment drilling in the rain, 'cause the belts get wet and slip and you're liable to lose your tools in the hole and then you're

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got a fishing job on your hands. Swivel-neck he just kept on flogging it to her. I looked at Swivel-neck, then looked up in the sky, then started toward the pots, hoping he would tell me to shut down. But he said nothing, only kept flogging it to her. When I come back on the derrick floor I leant against the headache post and looked up at the black clouds; they was just about to bust, so I said to Swivel-neck, 'Kinda look like rain, don't it?' 'Young man,' growled Swivel-neck, 'you talk too goddamn much; take your lunch-pail and go and get your time.' "

"He run you off, huh?"

"Yeh, I never wanted to hit a man so bad in all my life."

"Old Butch, that's the no-good monkey I'm working for, he tries to act plenty hard, but he ain't hard. If you just up and tell him where to get off, he'll leave you alone. It'll never do to let him know you're scared of him, 'cause he'll deal you a lot of misery.

"Last Monday 'bout quitting time he comes up to me. I'd been digging ditch all day and just 'bout give out. We had a water-line to get in the ground and we had to bury her deep to keep her from freezing up. Wahl, I was digging away and it was plenty tough, frozen on top and rock on the bottom; had to pick the whole goddamn thing. The going was slow, plenty slow. Wahl, Butch, he comes up to me and sarcastic-like says, 'Boy, you're working too hard in one place.' I just looks up at him and says real peaceful like, 'Butch, them's rocks.' I aint one for starting no arguments, but I ain't going to have no dumb hossier ariding me. 'Rocks, huh? Why don't you use your head? If you can't knock them loose with a pick, get a drill and sledge and another dumb monkey to help you. By God, I want that ditch dug and I want you to get your mind out of Arkansas and think 'bout what you're doing.' Yeh, that's what he said to me but I got him told. 'Say, I'm only working from my neck down for this outfit. I ain't paid to think.' 'Wahl, you better snap out of it or I'll give you something to think about.' That made me sore, plenty sore. So I knocks the pick off the handle and says to him, 'Why don't you get started, you ain't tied, is you?' "

"What did he say?"

"He didn't say nothing; just walked away mumbling to his-self crazy-like. That's the only way you can get along with them hard monkeys; get them told right now."

"Lum, let's me and you go and get a cup of coffee. I'm feeling mighty dry."

"Sure; come on, we'll go in the back of this pool hall and take a drink of coffee, yodelling coffee. Come on, get high behind."

"I ain't saying no."

"Wahl, come on."

"What can we use for whiskey?"

"Mister, I've got a pint of the best whiskey that can be got in this county. It's real old stuff, a whole week old, mind you, a whole week old. Close the door."

"Maybe I——"

"Close the door. Take a drink."

"I ain't——"

"Take a drink!"

"All right, but only two fingers."

"In a washtub."

"Ugh, ugh, that's rotten stuff, Wish I had a barrel of it."

"When this country goes dry I'm going to swear off drinking. Yes, sir, I'm going to swear off."

"Lum, you're a linepiper from way back, ain't you?"

"Yeh, I'm one of them boys with a strong back and a weak mind."

"Don't you know nothing 'bout drilling?"

"Naw."

"Did I ever tell you 'bout the well me and Rope Choker drilled over that cave in West Virginia?"

"Huh?"

"Sure, you remember. Me and Rope Choker was drilling in West Virginia, right smart time back, and it happened to be over a cave but we didn't know it. Wahl, Mister, we drilled and drilled and drilled and, by God, we got down 'bout five mile and still we didn't hit the pay. Rope Choker, he wanted to shut down but I wouldn't let him; just stubborn, you know. So we drilled on further down, 'bout seven mile.

"Then we got to studying; we knew there must be something wrong somewhere. So late one eve-

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ning I took a mope down the north side of the hill. You see, the well was up on a high hill and we always come up on the south side. Wahl, I took a mope down on the north side of the hill, and when I got to the bottom I saw an opening to a cave, a big opening, big enough for a pair of mules and a wagon. So I walked in, and there, right under our well, was a crew of men unscrewing the pipe as fast as we could get it in the hole. Yes, sir, unscrewing the pipe! But what made me red, plenty red, was these same monkeys was the ones we was buying our pipe off of. Mister, that was a lesson I ain't never forgot. Yes, sir, it was old Billy Hell.

"Wahl, I'll be goddamn, if the 'old cat' ain't trying to pull my leg."

"No! no! Take a drink."

"It may be old Billy Hell to some folks but it's heaven in my books."

"Take a drink. That ain't no drink. Come on, take a drink."

Night. Somewhere the world sleeps. Somewhere, but not here; for there is no sleep in the oil-fields. Fresh men relieving tired men. Engines ceaselessly pound. Man's activity, that perpetual motion, which makes life from a stupid existence.

"Hey, Lum, ain't you going home?"

Finding of Domicile

By Polly Boyden

I stood by the bedroom window looking out across the river toward the old quarter of Prague. The sun was low in the sky. It would set in an hour or two. Behind me, in the adjoining sitting-room, a servant girl was building a fire in the iron stove with shiny nickel trimmings. The old-fashioned Nürnberg stove stood unused in another corner. My husband was paying off the taxi-driver who had brought up our bags. He was staring at a handful of kronen, wondering how many of them would make a generous tip.

Then the taxi-driver touched his cap and left. The servant girl put the last shovelful of coal on the fire. She clattered out. There was quiet in the room broken only by the soft movements of my husband as he deposited his hat and coat on a chair and transferred the small change from his pocket to the table. He took off his watch and chain, laying them alongside the little heap of kronen, and joined me by the western window.

"So this is a Domicile!" he said. "It's a pretty fancy set-up, don't you think so, baby? A regular bridal suite!"

I smiled, putting my arm through his: "Just two Bohemians getting a divorce in Bohemia."

As I said the flippant words, my mind flew back to that moment in the dining-car on the express to Prague when my husband had tried to explain the mechanics of the business. I remembered how he had been looking out of the window, shading his eyes with his hand as he spoke: "The decree must contain a finding of domicile and a finding of physical cruelty."

We stood now, facing the sunset. Between vertical bars of black smoke which rose from factory chimneys, the oblique rays shone full in our eyes. A train crossed the suspension bridge spanning the river. Above the scream of the locomotive whistle we could hear the faint jingle of glass. The tiny crystal balls of the chandelier shook with the vibration. We were too tired after our recent journey from Paris to wonder where the train was going. Already it had vanished among the buildings on the opposite bank, leaving above the water a horizontal funnel of smoke. I followed the slow disintegration of this pattern, speculating as to whether the noise of the trains would keep us awake nights. We both needed sleep.

Disturbed by the train, gulls were darting excitedly here and there, black against the sunset, suddenly white against the iron girders of the bridge.

He said: "They must have migrated from the Baltic Sea. They'll be flying north again with the spring."

I thought about the spring: gulls flying over

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gabled roofs and over fields of sugar beets just beginning to sprout; my husband back on Long Island walking through the twilight to the eighteenth green while men and women watched his approach from the terrace of the country club where they were waiting to welcome him among them; our little girl . . . her bare thighs as she leaned over the pond in the Luxembourg Gardens to poke her boat with a stick; myself sitting on a bench with a book in my lap, a finger marking the page, as I scanned the crowds for a face . . . a vague, imaginary face. . . .

My husband must have been thinking along these same lines because he said: "Well, here we are in Praha, baby! It seems sort of funny in a way . . . our being here, I mean. It all happened so gradually. How *did* it all happen?"

"Things don't stand still," I said. "They just keep moving right along unless somebody does something to stop them."

Beneath our window street lamps suddenly flared, weaving among the chairs and tables an eerie pattern of light and shade. "Like moonlight," I thought, sensing the stillness and mystery of moonlight as we stood side by side in the unfamiliar room.

"Do you like our Domicile?" He seemed to be expecting my assent, my approbation.

"Of course. It's a room with a view."

The light from the street lamp lay in stripes along the ceiling. It gleamed on the crystal chandelier and on the leaves of the rubber plant in the wicker flower stand. The servant girl entered with a pitcher of hot water. She switched on the electricity. We moved apart a little self-consciously: "Merci beaucoup. Danke sehr. Ja, gut . . . sehr gut."

The girl set the pitcher of water on the imitation marble top of the wash-stand, grinned at us shyly, and hurried out.

An hour or so later we were walking along the river. No taxis were anywhere around, but cars clanged and passed at intervals. We hurried along, using the solid wall of apartment buildings to protect us from the wind. The road drew out ahead of us like a stretched elastic which might suddenly snap and hit us in the face. Almost at once, however, we passed a native "Restaurance."

"That word rings a bell," he said. "Maybe there's a bar in there where we could get a drink, if you understand what I mean."

We entered a smelly basement room where beer was being drawn from three spigots by an old Czechish woman with a purple bandanna around her head. A young boy with the thick, sullen lips and the slant eyes of the Slav stood by the counter waiting for the glasses.

"Some smart guys have sent their office boy around here to fetch them beer. A soft life."

While she was waiting for the foam of the beer to subside, the old woman poured two cognacs. She brought them over to the table where we were sitting, removing several empty steins rimmed with stale beer. Then she drew a little more beer into the half-filled steins on the counter. The foam overflowed. She set them aside again for a while. It was a slow business drawing the beer.

With her hands folded across her stomach, the old woman beamed toward the table: "You're married, yes?" she said in German. "Yes. We are married." "I could see that, gnädige Frau." She nodded and smiled, glancing from us to the subsiding foam and back again. My eyes were fixed on the steins while the yellow part climbed slowly upward, absorbing the white. Marriage was like that, I thought: if you waited long enough the glass would be filled with only a little foam on top. If you waited long enough, . . . the foam would subside.

"Here's to our Domicile!" He lifted his tiny cognac glass.

"Here's to all rooms with views! I'm for them."

"This is a swell little dug-out. And just around the corner! I expect to see a good deal of this place before we're through with Praha."

A workingman entered. His trousers were powdered with a fine white dust. There was a feather in his dilapidated green felt. He straddled a stool, leaning his elbows on the counter, which was wet with spilled beer. He drank his beer, wiping the foam from his mustache with the sleeve of his sweater while the old woman spoke to him in Czechish. My husband and myself were both watching . . . listening to the flow of sound. We could feel our limbs relaxing, time slipping softly past like words in a strange tongue. There was a long, easy silence while we sat, our chairs tipped against the wall, a far-away look in our eyes.

"The Czechs are a wonderful little people, don't

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you think so, baby?" My husband winked at me, pushing his hat back farther on his head. "How about one more cognac apiece? And then maybe we better eat."

Wind was blowing down the river, rippling the reflections of the street lamps on the opposite bank. Men hurried along the sidewalk hunched to the wind. No taxis in sight, but from under the suspension bridge a trolley car was coming. We ran toward a red sign, huddling against each other for protection from the wind.

"If 'jedte krokem' means 'cars stop here,' we're riding pretty. If it doesn't, the joke's on us."

The trolley stopped a block down the street. People were hurrying toward it, crowding in. We ran.

We missed the car. As it clattered past us we slowed down to a walk, leaning against the wind, which was at our backs now. After a short wait we climbed into a car, number 17. I noticed the number. It seemed to spring toward us out of the square white placard.

My husband was fumbling in his pocket for change: "I'm wondering how much to give this bird."

He gave five kopeks to the conductor, who returned two of them and some change.

"They're taking us for a ride, baby. It's costing us four cents apiece."

I was going to laugh, but something stopped the sound on the way up through my throat and pushed it down into my chest again. "They're taking us for a ride . . . a ride. . . ." Let's see, now! That was over four years ago. Acute appendicitis! An awful scare.

Across the wiggly bars of light (just for a flash as such pictures leap into the memory) I saw our small daughter on a wheel table being pushed into the operating-room. Hovering behind her, the street lamps on the opposite side of the river were so large and incandescent that I knew they must burst suddenly and turn into a shower of sparks. Farther away, other lights retreated, blurring together as the suburbs climbed the hills west of Prague.

A faint nausea, the odor of ether in my throat, had stopped the laugh. Across the wiggly bars of light (surely those swollen street lamps must burst like bubbles!) I saw the outline of the little body, sharply defined beneath the sheet covering it, as the child was being wheeled along the hospital corridor. Slant brown eyes looked up at my husband from a pale face: "Are they taking me for a ride, daddy?" "Yes, Mouse. They're taking you for a ride." The trolley rattled along. Lights wavered on the water. Bodies swayed against us in the crowded car.

We dined at Hunek's and ordered Czechish wine to be brought in at once. It came in a funny squat bottle like a liqueur bottle.

"Let's have some hoppel-poppel. It's the only thing on the menu I can pronounce."

We sat dreamily sipping the wine until the food came. Both of us, after the tension of the last six months, were beginning to feel a slow slackening. . . . No one could nag you or worry you here. To sit in Czechish restaurants sipping wine! To sit like wax images in Czechish restaurants, the musky heat of hoppel-poppel on the tongue! I was tasting the dish, wondering what gave it its peculiar sharpness of flavor. Curry, maybe. But something else too! Something which clung to the roof of my mouth. Something which would surely cling to my memory after the form and outline of things had become blurred: my husband's hand fingering the wine glass . . . an upright piano in a corner of the restaurant . . . a woman—she looked Russian—sitting alone at a far table . . . and, holding together this succession of images, the taste of hoppel-poppel, aromatic, like musk.

Occasionally a remark was thrown out by one or the other of us. It plumped into the middle of the smooth silence like a pebble into a pool. Later there was music. A violin and the piano played a German waltz.

"That music sounds like hoppel-poppel, don't you think so, baby?"

I was swaying back and forth, humming the familiar tune: "It's getting late. Maybe we better go back to the Domicile."

"Let's have one more bottle of wine first and talk about life. What do you think about life, baby?"

Puffing a cigarette, I smiled at him through the smoke.

"You know," I said, "it's funny, but I can't remember when we've ever been . . . well . . . fellow conspirators like this before. No more wrangling. No more recriminations. Just a couple of

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kids throwing stones at a street lamp or something."

I wanted to go on, to tell him more about how I felt. I knew exactly, as a matter of fact. It was as if we were children again, being punished, kept in after school. We were in the fourth-grade room of the Westport public school. I knew it was the fourth-grade room by the photographic reproduction of Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair" on the wall. We both sat there without looking at each other, while the shouting of children outside the window grew fainter and fainter, retreated up the street. A clock ticked loudly.

Yes. That was the way I felt. But I said: "Maybe we better take a little trip together occasionally after this."

"Sure. That would be fine. But what if my next wife won't let me get away?"

"You won't consult *her,* darling, if I know you." I was drawing squares and circles with my knife on the table-cloth, slashing at the table-cloth, my head bent for fear my eyes might betray bitterness, accusation. Then suddenly I looked at him gaily: "And you would hardly expect *me* to have any scruples."

He motioned to the waiter for the check: "Let's hoppel-poppel out of here."

On the embankment along the river the wind was at our backs, the sky sprinkled with stars. I had my hand in his pocket, peering into his face, which was thrown sharply into relief by a street lamp. His eyes were young with long lashes, but the lines from his nose to his mouth were strongly marked. His hand joined mine in the pocket. I could feel his fingers warm and reassuring. Mine were like ice.

That night the trains did not bother us. We awoke to the shouts of children playing in the vacant lot next door. Sunlight flooded the room from the windows to the south. It must be late, I thought. The sun was almost at the zenith. My limbs felt light, a little numb, after the long rest. From where I lay I could see a Gothic church on a hill. We might climb up there later to get a bird's-eye view of the city. It wasn't far, but a steep climb.

The windows to the south through which I saw the church were hung with curtains of cotton voile. As the sun poured through them, I noticed that they were gray with soot. Probably smoke from the trains! With the critical eye of the housewife I examined the room, imagining the curtains washed and crisply starched, potted flowers in the wicker stand instead of the rubber plant, chintz slip-covers on the plush furniture in the sitting-room, possibly (my fancy was running away with me now) a white bearskin on the bedroom floor. Of course the woodwork must all be painted, but I would keep it white. No color except the flowers. For the rest, only sunlight.

My husband opened an eye. He threw the covers away from his shoulders and turned on his back: "Hello, baby! Why don't you hoppel-poppel over here!" He lifted a corner of his blanket.

We settled down together. His head, with the unbrushed hair standing straight up from his forehead, cupped itself in the curve of my shoulder. For some time we lay quietly, bathed by sunlight and by the fresh March breeze. Then a train thundered over the suspension bridge, shaking the building, filling the air with smoke. Startled, I sat up in bed. The train was going west. Paris was west. Returning in a few days to Paris, we could see our Domicile clearly from the wagon-lit. Maybe a window open . . . the servant girl airing the rooms, preparing them for other occupants.

I reached for my watch on the table between the two beds. It was eleven-twelve. The express for Paris left a few minutes after eleven, then. No wonder we felt so rested! But we better hurry up about breakfast and get some fresh air before tackling the business of the afternoon. At three o'clock we must sign papers . . . our two names on the dotted line at the end of a long complaint written in a strange tongue.

Then there were other things to do: the power of attorney to be assigned, so that we wouldn't have to appear in court when the action came before the judge; the complaint to be translated. But the lawyers would manage everything. We could sign on the dotted line when told to.

I jumped out of bed to shut the window. Air sprayed around me like a shower bath. In the vacant lot children played on a huge pile of gravel. I watched them absent-mindedly for a moment, thinking of Mouse . . . the flash of her red skirt if ever she ran with pail and shovel among the Czechish children. Mouse would like that gravel pile!

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And the vacant lot was certainly convenient. I could keep an eye on the child from the sitting-room window.

My husband, in the meantime, was still in bed. He seemed unconcerned enough as he lay on his stomach, his back to me, turning the pages of a magazine we had brought from Paris.

The Czechish woman from whom we had rented the rooms brought in the breakfast herself. She lingered at the foot of our beds talking, in her lumbering German, about the students, French, English, Russian, who had occupied that room before us. Then she said an interesting thing: "Praha means 'threshold' in old Czechish." A Russian studying music at the University had told her so, she said. The word came from a Slavic root.

That was funny! Prague meant "threshold." To be getting a divorce in a city called "threshold"! I stared incredulously at the woman, thinking what little things seemed sometimes tremendous: things like Prague's meaning threshold. . . .

"Do you suppose she has figured us out?" asked my husband when the good woman had finally torn herself away.

"Well, hardly. But I think she's *for* us."

"Why shouldn't she be for us? We've paid her three months' rent, haven't we?"

"I half wish we were staying here that long. I could fix up this Domicile. Have the curtains washed. Throw out the rubber plant. But for only a week or so it's hardly worth it."

"This Domicile suits me all right the way it is."

We climbed to the church for the view over Prague. A city of onion-shaped domes. The river winding along. Even the boat-landing under our window and a patch of the gravel pile in the vacant lot. But the Domicile itself was hidden by an advertisement sign: "NOVE PRAHA. NOVE IDEALY. NOVE UKOLY." I wondered what *ukoly* meant. In spite of the onion-shaped domes, Praha was a very modern city. Yes, the Czechs were a wonderful little people! Like the Germans they were; very serious about life, believing in the future. Idealism. Faith. Maybe *ukoly* meant faith. What the world needed was a new faith. What *we* needed . . . I wasn't sure . . . but I knew that we had come to the edge of something . . . a proud freedom . . . a wider loneliness. Looking over the river, the housetops, the hills behind them, I wondered about that Russian walking back from the University along the river to his rooms. What sort of freedom had he found here in this city of onion-shaped domes?

Several hours later, after a long session in the lawyer's office, we stopped at a bookstore in the Nabrezi Razinovo, where my husband bought a detective story. "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism" was in the window. I bought that because it was by Bernard Shaw; but when we were back in the apartment again I didn't read it. I simply sat by the western window in our bedroom watching men unloading gravel from a barge on the river.

A man in the barge was scattering water on the gravel with his shovel. He would dip the shovel into the river and skim the water from the surface as cream is skimmed from a pan of milk. His trousers were powdered with a fine white dust from the gravel. The man with the feather in his hat! After he was through with the day's work (the light was lengthening, it was getting on toward sunset), after he was done with shovelling gravel for the day, he would be drinking beer (yes, that was the same man, I was pretty sure), talking to the old Czechish woman with the purple bandanna around her head.

With my elbows on the window-sill, I pressed my fingers against my eyes. It had been a strain in the lawyer's office. The rat-tat-tat of typewriters; stenographers moving about; two of them whispering in a corner and staring at me as the lawyer translated the complaint: "The plaintiff was always an affectionate and true wife. . . ." ("You're married, yes? I could see that, gnädige Frau.") "The defendant did strike and brutally treat . . ." ("Let's have one more bottle of wine, baby, and talk about life. . . .")

Down below me, in the barge on the river, five men were shovelling the gravel. The wheelbarrows, while they were being filled, rested on planks stretching from one side of the barge to the other. Then they were wheeled down gangplanks to the embankment and dumped. I watched this process minutely. It made a sort of pattern, monotonous, like weaving: one barrow going, another coming, dumping, throwing up the gravel from the bottom of the barge . . . one man resting now, looking off toward the sunset.

Whenever two men started loading at the same

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moment I would bet with myself which of them would get his wheelbarrow filled first . . . and dumped . . . and back to the starting-point. After considerable attentive watching I figured out that the man with the feather in his cap could do a little better than five trips while the man next to him only managed four.

The light was changing. It was almost six o'clock. But I would wait there at the window until the men laid off for the day. I wanted to see if the man with the feather in his cap would make for the basement bar. Perhaps we might drop in ourselves later for a cognac. If the Czech laborer spoke German I might try talking to him . . . about where the gravel came from . . . whether he had any children.

The men must be working overtime to finish that job of unloading the gravel. My man was slowing down. I watched him start off loading his wheelbarrow with two others and be beaten by both. Maybe he was tired, I thought, but with a nice kind of tiredness . . . muscles of the back aching . . . a sort of drowsy feeling. Well, I would be getting that drowsy feeling soon myself: "Noch einen cognac, bitte schön!"

"But when his brutality did not cease . . ." Yes, I would drink several glasses, wanting to feel my limbs relax again, time slipping softly past like words in a strange tongue. . . . "The defendant did strike and brutally treat . . ." I heard my husband in the next room, rummaging around in the desk. He was looking for stamps, I supposed. . . . "The defendant struck the plaintiff in the face. . . ."

Several of the men had finished dumping their heap of gravel. They were beginning to stack their wheelbarrows in the stern of the barge, getting in the way of *my* man, who was scraping the bottom of the barge for the last few little stones. Pretty soon he would have his drink of beer and go home to his supper. His wife was cooking it now . . . a big pot of something like Hungarian goulash.

"The defendant struck the plaintiff in the face."

I was back in the lawyer's office again. The lawyer's secretary, who was reading the complaint, hesitated, biting his pencil: "That part is weakened by the translation. We have one word in Czechish which means *struck in the face.*"

A pretty strong word that! I saw my husband's profile as he thought about it, his long lashes, the way his forehead wrinkled when he talked: "I don't like the *face* part of it. Couldn't you use another word meaning just plain hit or shoved? Couldn't I just push her around without mentioning the face part?"

The sun set behind the houses across the river. The barge was moving away from the embankment poled by three men. They would thrust their long poles into the shallow water, getting a grip in the mud of the river bed. Then they would walk the length of the barge, leaning against the poles . . . pushing the barge forward.

FALLOW

By Raymond Holden

We shall not plant again
The hillside quilt with rye,
For we are only men
That see things change and die.

Now, having taken on
The atmosphere of gold,
Our victory well won
Has left the hillside cold.

The whisper-feathered stalk
Is but another care
And we can only talk
Who saw the buckwheat there.

We shall not ever plant
Merely for grace again.
Not for the sycophant
That lovely, profitless grain.

We shall attend the school
Of fact and artifact,
Playing the lofty fool
That laughs at what he lacked.

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AS I LIKE IT – *William Lyon Phelps*

In the year 1906 two excellent novels appeared in England which gave their authors both popularity and fame—"Joseph Vance," by William De Morgan, and "The Man of Property," by John Galsworthy. One of the first notable men in England to recognize the distinction of the latter book was the late Alfred Ollivant, author of the finest dog-story ever written—"Bob, Son of Battle." He was a good friend of mine, and when I wrote to him urging him to read "Joseph Vance," I received the following reply, written from Eastbourne, August 18, 1907.

I have not read "Joseph Vance" yet. Thank you for telling me about him. He has been well reviewed here in the considerable papers but I have not heard him talked about probably because I live a very secluded life, and know no literary folk. But curiously enough, two days after getting your letter I heard from Henry Jackson, the Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and perhaps our biggest scholar now Jebb is dead, and he advised me to read the book as being notable. And I shall certainly do so.

The literary sensation here to my mind has been the publication of a book called "The Country House" by a man called Galsworthy. It is the truth to say that I had not read a page before I found myself saying—"Here is a new mind." And further reading confirmed my first impression. In the first place G. is a consummate artist—how rare for an Englishman. I have heard him compared to Flaubert. In the second place he is soaked in our great modern idea of Evolution. It is this last characteristic which puts him in a place by himself, and distinguishes him from his contemporaries, and from those who have gone before. I may say I have been waiting for his coming for years. He is the first big mind who has applied the vast resources thrown open to the gaze of the men of our generation by Science to literature—perhaps it would be more accurate to say the first big Anglo-Saxon mind. Some of his effects in this kind are marvellous. He has written several books, but only two of note, I fancy—"The Country House" and "The Man of Property." The second is very strong, almost brutal. It is a purely critical book; there is no creative beauty about it; but G's genius is essentially critical. At the same time he is on our side, the side of the angels, right enough. And if he is brutal, it is with the brutality of the surgeon. He destroys to make alive. The other book has more poetry in it. Do get them and let me know what you think of them.

Mark Twain received a tremendous ovation from the undergraduates at Oxford when taking his degree there—far greater than Kipling.

I must have written him that I preferred "The Man of Property" rather than "The Country House" (as I did and do), for on Ooctober 17, 1907, he wrote

As to "The Country House" I think one reason I like it so much is that it deals with the life I know best. Then again I think you hardly do justice to Mrs. Pendyce and her charm. There is true beauty, true romance, about her. Moreover up and down the book there are passages of poetry which say all manner of mysterious things to me—the dying rabbit bit, the bits about the race-horse, bits here and there about flowers. They whisper to me of the Oneness of things. Galsworthy is the first novelist I have come across who really understands the doctrine of Evolution; and for that alone, apart from his critical insight, his bitter humour, his philosophy, his work is for me remarkable.

I am quite sure that some readers will snort when they see Galsworthy called brutal—but in comparison with other novels published during the early years of this century, I can understand how "The Man of Property" seemed to Mr. Ollivant "very strong." And after all, it is stronger than many vociferous novels of these latter days—and seems to have enough virility and vitality to outlive more sensational works.

In 1909, "Observer," in the London *Daily Mail*, made the following comment:

Of all quickly made reputations, that of Mr. John Galsworthy is one of the most remarkable. A few, a very few, years ago only the really initiated ever heard of such a person; today, it may be proclaimed, both as playwright and novelist, Mr. Galsworthy occupies the central chair in the Areopagus of English letters for all-round talent and brilliancy. The case is an unusual one. Not many men succeed in fiction and the drama. . . . Now Mr. Galsworthy has succeeded in both these arts. And more. Not only does he practice them both, but he practices them both at one and the same time. . . . Yet another curious thing. He has had no failures, no positive stoppage or set back, and this is the more remarkable because he has never pandered to popular taste.

Indeed the quantity and quality of Mr. Galsworthy's production in the ten years beginning with 1906 are astonishing. "The Man of Property," "The Country House," "Fraternity," "The Patrician," "The Dark Flower," "The Freelands," together with the following plays: "The Silver Box," "Strife," "Justice," "The Pigeon," "The Fugitive," "The Mob."

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When Mr. Galsworthy finished writing "The Man of Property" and published it in 1906, he had no thought of going on with the Forsyte family; but either because these men and women interested him more than his subsequent creations, or because there was a widespread and sharp demand from his readers, he went back to this family; and his career as a novelist reached its climax exactly ten years ago, when he published "The Forsyte Saga" in 1922.

So far as one can judge, this book has a good chance for permanent fame. As a novel, it contains his most vital characters; as a social document, it ranks with "Jean Christophe," by Romain Rolland. If future historians wish to chronicle the political, artistic, commercial and social life of England from 1875 to 1920, they will find this work invaluable.

The development of the character of Soames Forsyte from an offensive, even disgusting boor to a sensible, kindly English gentleman runs parallel to the ripening personality of his author. I used to think that the title of one of Mr. Galsworthy's earliest books, "The Island Pharisees," might stand as a label for his complete works; his point of view, as recognized both in British and in German literary criticism, was sufficiently satirical to be called bitter; in his later works, he has mellowed and looks out on life with sympathy and charity. It is natural perhaps that with the gain in understanding has come a loss in cutting edge. This makes some of his later works—in comparison with the strong, almost putrid meat of contemporary novels—seem mild.

If Mr. Paul Cohen-Portheim is correct in saying that the finest flower of evolution is the English Gentleman, I do not know what better illustration of the type we could find than Mr. Galsworthy himself. Coming from an old and distinguished English family, he went through the regular degrees—public school at Harrow, New College at Oxford, the law, foreign travel. His pictures of English society are correct, because he has always "belonged."

In his latest novel, "Maid in Waiting," a thoroughly expert, competent piece of work, with living characters saying and doing things appropriate to their position, temperament, and class, we have a family album of portraits. Into this exclusive circle of English gentry bursts an outsize American, overflowing with irritating vitality. Although a university professor, he is one hundred per cent masculine. His tremendous vigor, his ruthless scorn of nerves, his Rooseveltian emphasis on the virtues of reckless courage, vehement energy, and resolution, make him dominate every group. Instead of a pleasant breeze on a sultry day, it is as if he opened the windows in winter, and made all the company shiver in a distressing draught. The reticent, well-bred British ladies and gentlemen regard him with that inner horror which the quiet man feels for the genial backslapper. Such unpleasant contact was described once for all in the Bible.

> He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him (Proverbs, 27:14).

In the early stages of this novel, I wondered if Mr. Galsworthy, who has done more than almost any other English writer to establish and preserve understanding and goodwill between English and Americans, had finally joined the large company of those who delight in representing Americans as vulgar and pushful. But as the story develops, we see that the American's excellent qualities change the attitude of his English acquaintances from hostility to cordial friendship.

Mr. Galsworthy's latest play "The Roof" is now published. There will, perhaps, always be a mystery concerning the relation of Vicki Baum's play "Grand Hotel" to "The Roof." I believe "The Roof" was written first.

This is a good time to buy a set of Galsworthy's works, either in the most expensive or least expensive form.

Those who are on the lookout for the "leafage and branchage" of a new poet, should secure, while it is still possible, a sonnet sequence called "Westward" by Harold Cooper, only two hundred copies printed, and published by the Athens Press at Iowa City, Iowa. Mr. Cooper is a graduate of the University of Cambridge; he spent one year studying at Yale and another at Princeton, at both of which places he introduced the English game of Rugby football. He is now instructor in English at Iowa City. This little book contains fifty-one love-sonnets, written with such passion in feeling and such beauty of language, as to make me believe in the arrival of another Poet.

A new Life of Ibsen in two volumes is by Halv-

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dan Koht, translated from the Norwegian by Ruth Lina McMahon and Hanna Astrup Larsen. It is copiously illustrated and some of the portraits of Ibsen have not been seen in America hitherto. It is a reliable and readable biography.

Our American novelist, Joseph Hergesheimer, has turned from writing novels on American history to American history itself. His "Sheridan—A Military Narrative," with an elaborate bibliography and excellent index, should take its position as a standard work. As might be expected, it is admirably written; sensational and theatrical effects are studiously avoided, but it carries the reader on a swift current. What the author says of "Sheridan's Ride" will be found particularly interesting. I remember how in schooldays we used to belch that poem out at "declamation exercises." When I was ten years old, at school in Providence, I remember a young lady telling me that when General Sheridan made a triumphal progress through Providence some years after the war, she, a little girl, recited this poem in the open air, while Sheridan listened attentively. At the close, she was brought to him and he kissed her *coram publico*.

Mr. Hergesheimer gives a vivid account of Sheridan's various campaigns and battles, and conspicuously avoids the conventional summary at the close. The reader may summarize for himself.

I commend to all intelligent and thoughtful readers the philosophical remarks on war that appear on pages 42 and 43. However much we may detest war, it is evident that a general to be successful, must not and cannot spare his men; he must not even think of them as individual souls; but only as masses to be hurled or deployed or drilled, "without a thought of their possible importance and personal divinity." Mr. Hergesheimer believes that McClellan was a failure because he was reluctant to lead his men to slaughter. A competent commander must not consider such things.

It is curious to observe, since the war of 1914–1918, the enormous and ever-growing prestige of the American generals of our civil war. If we may judge by expert foreign military opinion, five Americans in one local war—Lee, Jackson, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan—stand higher in military annals than any general from any country in the war between nations. I know nothing about this myself; I am merely recording the opinions of experts.

"Hatter's Castle," by A. J. Cronin, a very long novel dealing with one of the most despicable men ever created by a fictioneer, has received immense acclaim. It is admirably written; but in the endeavor to harrow the feelings of readers and to show what a hellish thing human life is, I wonder if the author has not somewhat overshot his mark, especially in describing the circumstances leading up to the birth of Mary's child. Anyhow, we must all love Mary, for she is the only lovable character in the narrative. I love her so much myself that I did not mind in the least when her High School sister hanged herself; because I was so absorbed in seeing what was going to happen to Mary.

So far as I know, there is no living person whom I really hate intensely or continuously. Perhaps this is not well for me. Perhaps there is an antiseptic quality about hate that may be valuable. Hence one reason why I like "Hatter's Castle," which my friend Percy Hammond calls the "world's worst novel," is my hatred for its hero. I can give hatred here its full and unqualified fury.

I believe that of all human characteristics, I dislike most of all cruelty and intolerance; the average person suffers so much anyhow that it seems to me abominable for any one deliberately to torture either his body or his mind. Hence also my disgust for war. There is such an enormous amount of hideous and apparently unavoidable suffering in the world, it seems to me the last extreme of folly for thousands of individuals to go out looking for it; especially when they go out toward anguish, crippling, blinding, idiocy, death, with bands playing sentimental music and ladies waving handkerchiefs. Golly! what a world!

Professional clergymen have the admirable custom of producing sons and daughters who write excellent novels, poems, and plays; but the clergymen seldom write these things themselves. They are too busy living to write about life. Yet the Reverend Victor Whitechurch in England writes charming murder stories; and the Reverend Robert Norwood in America writes authentic poetry. If you doubt this, let me suggest that you read Doctor Norwood's latest book of verse called "Issa."

Hamlin Garland continues his entertaining literary autobiography in a new volume, called "Com-

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panions on the Trail." All who enjoy literary gossip and anecdotes of men and women famous in the world of letters, will have a good time in these pages. There should be an index—perhaps there will be one in the final volume.

Two beautiful art books have appeared recently, which will be a fine addition to any private or public library—a quarto with handsome letter-press and twenty-four full-page plates, called "Claude Monet." The second is folio size, "The Legend of St. Francis as Depicted in the Assisi Frescoes" and faithfully copied (in colors) by Edith M. Cowles, with a foreword by G. K. Chesterton. Anybody with some money in his pocket who should see either one or both of these books would not keep the money. Temptation is no word for it.

By the will of the late Avery Hopwood, some magnificent prizes are offered annually to students at the University of Michigan. It is hoped that ambitious young writers will come to the University to study English, and that graduate and undergraduate students already in residence may be freed from financial difficulties by winning one of these prizes. For the present academic year four prizes of $2,500 *each* are offered for the best plays, poems, fiction, or essays; and eight prizes of $250 each. Any one interested may learn the conditions by writing to the English Department of the University of Michigan.

Those who remember the first appearance (1890) of William Watson's magnificent poem "Wordsworth's Grave," greeted by the aged Tennyson with the remark "Always it is verses, verses, but now at last comes a poet," will be grieved to know that Sir William is in dire need for the bare necessities of life. In England a committee has been formed, among whose members are Lascelles Abercrombie, Sir James Barrie, Walter de la Mare, John Galsworthy, Rudyard Kipling, Bernard Shaw and others, to raise a sum sufficient to keep the poet's declining years free from absolute want. A good deal of money has been raised, but more is needed; and if any Americans wish to help (I do) they may send contributions to the Honorable Robert Underwood Johnson, 26 East 55th Street, New York. The fund will be administered by an English Committee, who in their appeal send out the following poem, composed years ago by Watson.

JUST A POSSIBILITY

I'll take life's hazards, rue not hours well wasted,
Hide my heart's wounds, ask no miraculous balm;
And ere I die, perhaps I shall have tasted
At last a little calm.

If one prefers to send directly to England, the organizer and honorary secretary is F. C. Owlett, 14 Queen Victoria Street, London.

Mrs. Herbert L. Hill, of New York:

An acquaintance of mine used to coach each summer the two sons of Professor Plum of Amherst—the boys being deficient in credits in mathematics. One morning she found on her desk the enclosed rhyme. They might be deficient in mathematics but they certainly excelled in other subjects.

Comes summer, come again these sums—
Each summer more sums for these Plums—
No winter of our discontent
Was e'er in such vexation spent
As to our summers sums have lent.
Somewhere some sumless summers shine,
Consummate sum of joy divine.
O were such sumless summers mine!

Here is a good letter for these times from Gerald Stanley Lee, and also a quotation from "How I Came to Write This Book," the book being "Heathen Rage" (1931).

My dear Billy

Isn't it pitiful? I agree with Wells that economists and experts must—when they get permission from the people to do it—rearrange the world but in a great emotional crisis of the nations why should literary men abscond from literature—from expressing and releasing the hearts of men—and why should our prophets back down out of their pulpits and leave the planet in the hands of the economists—when the only way to get the people to let the economists do what should be done, is to have books written and sermons preached in which the faith of men in one another is exultantly expressed and the credit of man and the reputation of God defended in his world!

A PRAYER FOR A BOOK

I see forty nations choking themselves to death with ships, poison gas, guns and godlessness . . . people afraid of their own governments . . . afraid of their churches . . . afraid of their banks. . . . I see picture-temples,

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radio-prophets, whispering tabloids, nightclub altars, Aimee McPherson saints, Shaw-religions, Ghandi-economics, boy choirs, jazz and lullabies, Stalin-saviors, Mussolinis, Al Capones, Charlie Chaplins, Jimmy Walkers, Borahs and Banks of England standing helpless by! . . . and Prayers and Statistics and Commissions and Omissions, and I see the man in the street go by feeling beerless, feeling bookless, bankless, leaderless, one hand on a rosary, one hand on a tin box fleeing from The Fear behind him to The Fear That stalks ahead. . . . And Wall Street lifting up its eyes to Heaven wanting some one in the next few days to write a bible or something—a hearty serene believing book, which will restore The Credit of Human Nature, which will take Fear—forty kinds of fear, forty nations of fear out of the hearts of the people. . . .

From Roy Murray, of Chicago:

Cats are not altogether stupid when they refuse to leave a tree after being chased there. In the presence of an enemy it is a safety measure. At tree climbing they are one-way animals. If they do not jump from the tree they must come down as they ascended—head up.

Squirrels have swivel-jointed ankles. When they come down a tree head first the claws are in the same position as when they ascended. Cats are not so fortunate.

I did not know that squirrels had swivel-jointed ankles. But I once saw a cat run straight down the trunk of a tree, as easily as a squirrel. But it had a rifle-bullet through its brain.

From J. Henderson, of New York City:

I see on p. 554 of the Nov. SCRIBNER's that you question the English origin of continental bathrooms. If you consider the matter of any importance, and will think it over, you will find, I believe, that the English put in the *first* bathroom, and that the *second,* to the two hundred and second, came through America. One bathroom to a house is a real innovation, two to a house is just a convenient and comfortable addition. As to evidence, see Prince Bülow's Memoirs on the English princes, and the sanitary condition of Prussian palaces. You are regarding matters from an aspect of 20 or 30 years, which is too short.

It was the first bathroom in a house that really counted. The others just came—the *possibility* of being clean as compared to the *easiness* of being clean.

But it was not a bathroom in a house that I was discussing. I was discussing hotels that had rooms with private baths. So far as one bath goes, either for a house or in a hotel for general use, I suppose the Romans had that.

From a correspondent in Chicago:

Now a much more serious matter. In a recent SCRIBNER you took occasion to speak as a champion of a classic garment now somewhat in disrepute. You shivered a lance for the nightgown of the male anthropoid. My humble and abashed valor stirred within me. Instantly I took heart, I burned to organize something—"Cooperative Society of the Masculine Nightgown, Inc." (*In corpore delicti*)—or anything, but something. I fostered a growing insurgency —I just had to join something.

Meanwhile, what are you doing about it? I am much het up. Rightly? Believe me. A spirited granddaughter had been reproved by me. She entered my bedroom. There I stood helplessly, clad in innocence and my compendious *robe de nuit.* Scornfully she looked me over and witheringly exclaimed:

"Grandfather, you're a fussy old man, and you wear a woman's nightgown."

Mehercule! Phelps of Yale, what are we going to do about it?

A former pupil, Harry Dodge, Yale 1905, writes from the neighborhood of Phœnix, Ariz., a town I have always wanted to see. Both Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Granville-Barker believe the climate to be celestial.

I am in the desert a few miles from Phœnix,—a wonderful climate, and the day or two I saw of the town opened my eyes to a wonderful city. Believe it or not, the citizens call themselves "Phœnicians." I said to one of them yesterday that I presumed it was because they put so much Sidon that they became Tyreing. The local paper had your picture a few days ago, in your library chair with your dog. It was captioned "Literature and Dogma." I showed it to one of my fellow lungers here, an editor of a St. Louis newspaper, and he thought it should have been called "The Sitter and the Setter."

BOOKS MENTIONED IN ABOVE ARTICLE, WITH NAMES OF PUBLISHERS

"Maid in Waiting," by John Galsworthy. Scribners. $2.50.
"The Roof," by John Galsworthy. Scribners. $1.
"Sheridan," by J. Hergesheimer. Houghton Mifflin. $4.
"Westward," by Harold Cooper. Athens Press, Iowa City.
"Life of Ibsen," 2 vols., by H. Koht. Norton. $7.50.
"Companions on the Trail," by Hamlin Garland. Macmillan. $3.50.
"Hatter's Castle," by A. J. Cronin. Little, Brown. $2.50.
"The Legend of St. Francis," by Edith M. Cowles. Dutton. $10.
"Claude Monet," by Xenia Lathom. Macmillan. $5.
"Issa," by Robert Norwood. Scribners. $2.50.
"Heathen Rage," by G. S. Lee. R. R. Smith. $2.50.

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STRAWS IN THE WIND

Significant notes in American life to-day

THE PAPERS PRINT THE RIOTS

By Louis Adamic

THE United States had between one and a half and two million unemployed the month before the fateful October, 1929, and in the ensuing winter the number of jobless probably doubled. But the press of the country, except of course the small and ineffective radical journals, manifested no awareness of the national unemployment situation till March, 1930.

Then, of a sudden, unemployment hit the front page everywhere, because on March 6 the Communists staged large "hunger demonstrations" in various cities. Some of the demonstrations —the one in New York, for instance— were extremely impressive and culminated in riots, during which the police rode down people and clubbed them.

The Red mob-steerers possess a keen instinct for doing things which result in publicity. In the March 6 demonstration, as well as in some later ones, they purposely so manipulated matters as to provoke the police—no difficult matter —to charge the mobs with clubs, knowing that riots and bleeding heads almost invariably led the press to print sensational front-page "stories" and pictures. The publicity which resulted from the riots, of course, was not of the most favorable kind, but then "bad" publicity often is better than no publicity at all. As unfavorable as were most write-ups, picture captions and editorials about those early Communist riots, they began to force the unemployment situation, growing steadily worse, on the national consciousness.

Late in March and early in April, 1930, there were more demonstrations and riots in various cities, and unemployment stayed on the front pages of even the most conservative papers till the middle of April, when it was relegated for about two weeks to inside pages. On May first more riots occurred and, as if by magic, labor and unemployment once again reached the front page and editorial writers began to take notice of the situation, some of them going so far as to question Mr. Hoover's optimism. But by mid-May the labor problem was off page one once more, to stay off it till early fall.

In September the Reds again demonstrated and provoked the police to club them; they raided Salvation Army stores in Manhattan and Brooklyn and grocery stores in Oklahoma City and Akron, Ohio—and, presto! front page again for labor and unemployment. Largely, it seems to me, as a result of this publicity, Mr. Hoover admitted in October that there was a national unemployment emergency, and in December the official Washington estimate of the number of jobless in the United States was six million.

From November, 1930, to March, 1931, unemployment was front-page "stuff" in the large cities on an average of twice weekly. The various relief organizations got no end of valuable newspaper space. But one who takes the trouble of going through the files of New York, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Philadelphia papers for those months, notices this striking fact—that unemployment and jobless relief were played up in a specially big way on the front pages for three or four days immediately after every Communist demonstration, food raid, or riot.

The Commnuist leaders' main purpose in staging the demonstrations, in organizing food raids, and in engaging their followers in battles with the cops, of course, was not to rouse the country to a realization of the critical situation, but to advance their cause, not so much here as abroad, by sending out greatly exaggerated reports of riots and trying to make the proletariat in other countries believe that the American workers were about to join them in a world revolution. Nonetheless, by dramatizing the situation with violence, they forced the press in America to play up unemployment, to inflict it upon the public mind, and to compel responsible government and civic leaders to pull their ostrich heads out of the sand.

Millions of jobless and work-eager people were not newsworthy in the eyes of the press in any big way—or at least the press did not become acutely cognizant of their existence and their plight—until the situation was dramatized or intensified with violence and bloodshed. Quietly suffering millions are not news; they are not dramatic enough. When one of them commits suicide in some alley, he gets possibly three lines on page ten. But when a mob raids a food store, or a few of them get their heads banged up, that is front-page news; that is dramatic.

Which, I think, is rather interesting, especially since the newspapers are inclined to get morally indignant when labor or radical groups resort or provoke the police to violence. Publishers and editors do not realize that by playing up largely news of violence and ignoring most of the non-violent labor news, they indirectly—and unwittingly, of course—urge labor to violence. Yet this obviously is so, not only in the great matter of nation-wide unemployment, but also in local strikes and other disputes between capital and labor.

For nearly three years the labor conditions in the bituminous regions of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Kentucky were worse than slavery conditions eighty years ago which produced the Civil War. But they were not important news to the American press—not even to such liberal journals as *The Nation* and *The New Republic* —until last summer, when the miners heaved up violently and bombs began to explode and some eight or ten pickets were butchered by the "Cossacks."

Evil labor conditions or even strikes in the United States are big news, as a rule, only after either the workers or the police, or both, employ violence. Last spring I happened to witness an intensely dramatic and complicated dispute in the anthracite towns of Penn-

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sylvania. Thirty thousand men were on strike, not only against the employers but also against their union, which sided with the bosses. But they and their cause were not important or interesting news—not even in Pennsylvania—till they began to march on the highways in mass formation and engage in battles with "scabs" and "Cossacks," and a few of them died and some mine shafts were dynamited. After that they became big news, not alone in Pennsylvania, but elsewhere; even *The Bronx Home News,* a purely neighborhood paper, featured a story about them on page one.

Last May there was a small laborers' strike in Greenwich, Connecticut, because contractors engaged on public works were reducing wages. No one outside of Greenwich, perhaps not many people even in Greenwich, heard of the dispute for weeks after it started. Then in a few hours it became national news because a mob of strikers and their wives stormed the Town Hall, smashed doors and windows, and for three hours resisted the efforts of policemen, several of whom were injured, to disperse them. The largest press associations handled the story. The New York *Herald Tribune* printed a long "special" on the front page. And mainly in consequence of this publicity the workers won the strike.

I could cite not a few similar cases in recent years. In the winter of 1928 there began a great lockout-strike of hosiery workers in Wisconsin, on which I happen to have authentic data. It was a dramatic and important strike, and the leaders tried to present the strikers' side of the question to the public through the newspapers, but for five months, while remaining peaceful and non-violent, their efforts were in vain. Then, when the strike seemed almost "dead," bombs began to explode and guns to pop, and suddenly the strike became lively news throughout the country. Within a short time twenty-eight houses in and around Kenosha, which was the centre of the strike, were dynamited, including the home of the vice-president and manager of one of the hosiery companies, which burned to the ground. Of the other houses bombed, two were inhabited by strikers and twenty-five by strike-breakers. In the same period twenty-four "scabs" and six strikers were shot and three thousand windows in the homes of non-union employees of the mills were "bricked," while for a whole week one floor of a large hosiery factory was peppered with fire from rifles equipped with Maxim silencers. Efforts of the police to locate the brains of this reign of terror were unsuccessful, and a special grand jury, meeting for six weeks, failed to return any indictments. The publicity which resulted from this violence was, for the most part, of course, unfriendly to the strikers, but the leaders were clever enough to organize at the same time patriotic demonstrations and "stunts," such as conducting a pilgrimage of strikers to the grave of Robert La Follette, which tended to offset the violence and win for the strikers a public sympathy, aiding them to score a partial victory in the end. According to the labor leader who took a part in the strike and who gave me these facts, "violence was the only thing." Without it the strike was not news, not even in Wisconsin; it was "dead," not sufficiently dramatic to be worthy of the editors' and reporters' attention.

Just one more recent incident. On May 15 last, a mob of Communists staged a demonstration at the Ellis Island ferry in New York, protesting against the deportation by the Federal Government of a young Chinese student at Columbia because he was a Red. There was a riot and bloodshed, and the next day most of the New York papers featured the occurrence on page one. The tabloid *Daily News* gave almost its entire front page to one of the best riot pictures I have ever seen. The incident was big news in other cities, and the Reds received no end of publicity. The New York *Times* ran a "story" occupying four-fifths of a column on page three, and immediately beneath it printed a one-inch item about the non-violent "fight" of a great international garment workers' union against wage-cuts! . . . That is to say, *The Times* saw fit to feature an incident which had to do with the fate of one obscure Chinaman palpably because it was a violent incident, and treated in five lines the non-violent efforts of the officials of a big union on which depended the future earnings and welfare of over one hundred thousand workers and their families.

Now, if I were the only person aware of the newspapers' great preference for violent labor news it probably would not be wise for me to point it out as I do here, for I might be accused of slyly urging labor to violence. But it so happens that scarcely anything I say will be new to most leaders and many members of the rank and file in either the right or the left wing of the labor movement, although this is the first article on the subject.

Recently a labor-union official in New York said to me: "Circumstances keep me in the —— Union (an A. F. of L. organization), but I know that the A. F. of L., with its polite attitude toward unemployment, has done no service to the American working class during this depression that compares with that rendered by the Communists, with their violent theatricalism and their cracked heads. They got the publicity. They scared the government and the capitalists."

A well-known radical laborite, active last summer in the tri-state coal region of western Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, remarked to me, with the understanding that I would not quote him by name: "Often there is nothing that throws as bright a spotlight on the sufferings and unrest of the working stiff as a flare-up of violence. The capitalist sheets don't pay any attention to him except when he gets rough or his head is bloody."

Labor leaders recognize the importance of getting their causes before the public. Often the only way they can get it is to resort or provoke the police to violence.

I do not mean to suggest that the so-called "capitalist" newspapers should not play up violence when it occurs in capital-labor troubles. A riot or a dynamite explosion is news which, perhaps, calls for a headline on page one. My purpose here is to point out the unwisdom and the danger of playing up violence on the front page and sticking other far more important labor news in one or two inch items on inside pages, or ignoring it altogether. I mean that newspapers worthy of that

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name should print all vital labor news, representing as far as possible both labor's and the employers' side of the various disputes, questions and problems. They should not wait for labor conditions to be dramatized by riots and dynamite and gunplay, but should seek them out or consider them news before they produce violence, and so far as possible try to prevent it.

The press, I think, can do a great deal to lessen the fierceness of the impending struggles between capital and labor. The press unquestionably has been a big factor in bringing civilization to its present status. The ability to bring to a wide public, news of events and ideas has been an immense influence on the manner in which we live and feel and reason. Upon the emphasis given the news "stories" rest the impressions that largely guide a nation's life. The indifference or blindness of the press to much vital non-violent labor news, and the mishandling of other vital labor news, if continued, may lead to harmful consequences, not alone to the immediate cause of labor, but to the ultimate well-being of the country.

Will the Boosters Stay Mum?

By Kyle S. Crichton

A GREAT deal has been written about the effect of the depression on the American booster spirit. It is plain that for the time being at least the go-getters and Babbitts are subdued. The question is whether they will come back when the storm is over.

The go-getters were active everywhere, but they were most noticeable in the smaller cities which were looking for the short cut to wealth. The condition was most evident in cities of between 25,000 and 75,000 in the Middle West and Far West. They were fired with the ambition of growth. "Beanville—45,000 in 1935." Projects were everlastingly popping up which were to make Beanville an industrial city, the "Metropolis of the West," the "Fastest Growing City between Kansas City and Los Angeles."

It would be impossible to estimate the millions of dollars lost in the last twenty years in visionary schemes calculated to boom the various Beanvilles. I am not referring to fake stock schemes, but to the plans entered into whole-heartedly by communities. The ideas considered by these Beanvilles were not necessarily worthless ideas nor were they all fostered by fast-talking promoters more interested in their rake-off than in any permanent good to Beanville. I say only that cities were often as naive as children in seizing upon each new idea as if it were at last the heaven-sent plan which was to put them on the map. No amount of failure seemed to cure them of this hopefulness.

The examples of Detroit and Los Angeles and Akron were always before them to prove that community foresight brought dividends. There was always the fear that in passing up an idea it might be the great idea which would have put Beanville in on the ground floor. The toughest minds had difficulty in standing up against this pressure and it was never a pleasant occupation for a Beanville business man to examine a proposition with a fishy eye and decide to oppose his enthusiastic townsmen. In every case the inference was left that if the town did not dally too long and was not too tight-pursed to spend the little promotion money necessary and not too deaf to hear opportunity when it knocked, this was the great plan which would put it over the top.

Let us examine the experience of one particular Beanville.

The drives for the various Liberty Loans had much to do in educating Beanville in the results to be expected from concerted effort. It had been proved that money could be raised for community purposes if enough people joined in a "drive" for it. In Beanville there was also a background for the booster spirit. In the early days it had been alert enough to furnish the ground upon which the Santa Fe Railroad shops were built. Not only did the shops grow until they employed 3,000 men, but at a later date the railroad returned to the subscribers approximately 65 per cent of the money which had been raised for the purchase of the land. This was a gracious gesture on the part of the railroad, but it was a costly one for Beanville. It made the way of each succeeding promoter easier.

It undoubtedly aided in the promotion of the wool-scouring plant which eventually went bankrupt, and of a blanket factory which met a like fate. It had much to do with the campaign for a yeast factory which was to utilize the equipment of the old brewery. Money was raised for this and much was spent, but no yeast was ever made.

But these were only the minor undertakings. A larger one was the promotion of the Southwestern Central Railroad, which was to tap coal and lumber lands near the city. This was a truly remarkable project which for years went through various stages of depression and elation, with the townspeople being belabored to raise money at critical junctures to prevent collapse. Naturally it was a private venture so far as benefits were concerned, but it was considered to be of great public value by reason of the business it would create for Beanville. Its struggles were epic, but it was finally built. Since then the railroad has gone into the hands of a receiver, the lumber company which took over the timber lands has gone into the hands of a receiver, and the coal company which was created to develop the property along the railroad right of way has gone into the hands of a receiver.

There were always oil booms in prospect, and in the case of one, thought to be particularly imminent, funds were raised for the building of a highway to the oil fields so that traffic would gravitate to Beanville rather than to its rivals. The rivals were also building roads and the oil companies were not objecting. The wells eventually came in dry.

But the greatest excitement of all was the War Veterans Memorial Sanatorium, which was planned as a $50,000,000 institution offering hospitalization to ex-service men and their dependents. The campaign for this was conceived by a citizen of Beanville, who got the approval of many patriotic organiza-

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tions, including the American Legion. Beanville for years put up money to get its representative East and then back home again. At last a point was reached where something definite seemed assured. A national organization was formed. After due investigation it selected Beanville as the ideal site for the hospital. When Beanville's representative returned home after this triumph he was met by a band and there was a parade. All that was needed now was a national campaign to raise funds. The money for promotional expenses was put up by Beanville, which subscribed $70,000 in one great effort.

The national campaign for funds was started in Oklahoma, as being the most liquid of States in 1927. The plan was operated on a broad front and with considerable ammunition and concerted energy. It seemed, however, that Oklahoma was almost a unit in thinking that if there was money to be spent for hospitals it should be spent in Oklahoma, where there was a great need for hospitals. After several months the $70,000 was spent, practically no subscriptions had been wangled out of Oklahoma, and the matter drifted away into forgetfulness.

It is a curious fact that in this as in all other instances, there was no resentment. Beanville was a city of 25,000 and was poor as cities go, but there was never any crying over spilt milk. The disappointment might be extreme, as it was in the case of the hospital, but it was soon forgotten and enthusiasm for the next project was undiminished.

Beanville also built a community hotel. On this occasion the campaign was in the hands of business men who in other campaigns had kept well in the background and had only been bludgeoned into contributing. Prominent among them was a gentleman who had not hitherto been thought of as a public benefactor. Now his speeches at public rallies and his own financial contributions were so stirring as to be infectious. Almost $400,000 was subscribed and the hotel was built, financed by shares of common and preferred stock held by the citizens of Beanville. It was only shortly after that the gentleman in question began making offers to stockholders who might desire to get rid of their stock. He very kindly suggested fifty cents on the dollar. A second community-inspired faction attempted to resist this newest outbreak of philanthropy and a court battle ensued which brought out testimony reflecting upon the public-spirited motives behind the building of the hotel. The result was that the enthusiastic gentleman mentioned above is now owner of the hotel, having purchased most of the stock at thirty cents or less. No dividends have ever been paid on the common stock; the preferred stock paid its first dividend seven years after the hotel was incorporated, but it is a good hotel and its owner is proud of it.

The word "publicity" has a magic meaning for Beanville. Various schemes for "putting Beanville on the map" were always in the air. A minor phase of it was raising money to send the High School basketball team to Chicago for the national interscholastic tournament. This was never based on the desire to reward the young men for their excellence, but was predicated on the plea that it would be good "publicity" for Beanville. The assumption seemed to be that the talent and general attractiveness of the young men were such that entire families would break up their homes to follow in their wake to Beanville.

For a time Beanville's most beauteous female was sent to the pulchritude carnival at Atlantic City. This meant train fares for the beauty and her chaperon and a suitable fund for clothes. The gain naturally was "publicity" for Beanville. Miss Beanville's picture would be in newspapers all over the country and in the news reels and her voice would be heard over the radio, saying, "Hello, everybody in Beanville!"

But an even finer example was the Good Roads convention which was won for Beanville by the Chamber of Commerce secretary, who went to Philadelphia for the purpose. Certain cash inducements were held out. The convention manager and his staff finally arrived in Beanville. Publicity was sent out. The names of nationally prominent speakers were mentioned. Thousands of delegates would be registered. A month before convention time Beanville was still shy on the money promised, and the hotels were shy of reservations. The convention manager called for a show-down. Unless the money were forthcoming the convention would be taken elsewhere. Beanville capitulated and the money was raised on the spot. Ten thousand dollars was paid over, the convention was held and fifty-seven out-of-town delegates were present. Business sessions were held in the armory which seated 3,000 and it was much like a poker game of eight meeting in Madison Square Garden. It developed later that the Good Roads convention had entertained just about the same proportion of delegates at its previous yearly meetings.

But what really brought the thousands from the purses of Beanville were the plans for industrial wealth. There were projects for a second railroad, funds for the purchase of land for an oil refinery, money for the construction of hospitals other than the gigantic one mentioned, and stock sales in several industrial plants which either did not begin or functioned so poorly that they soon closed.

In none of these ventures was there a cent returned to the contributors. But that never bothered Beanville. In fact, at the present moment it is still hopeful. The world may be in distress, but Beanville is still being "put on the map." One means is an annual celebration featuring the life of the West. Its purpose is to advertise Beanville to the world and to bring visitors who will pour money into the Beanville coffers. It has had a deficit every year since its start and there was talk after this year's show of calling it a day, but as this is written committees are tramping up and down Main Street raising another $7,500 to pay off all debts and start the show afresh. It may be more difficult to get money in Beanville, but the ambition is still there. It may be true that Babbitt has cracked and that the go-getters are hiding in the storm cellars, but I'm not so sure that they're going to stay cowed and cellar-bound.

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HER SON

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terpolated.) Stephen tilted his hat forward over his sunburnt nose with the drawn nostrils, crossed his arms under his thin neck, and closed his eyes. Mrs. Brown bent over Mrs. Glenn with one of her quick gestures. "Darling—before we go in to lunch do let me fluff you out a little: so." With a flashing hand she loosened the soft white waves under Mrs. Glenn's spreading hat-brim. "There—that's better; isn't it, Mr. Norcutt?"

Mrs. Glenn's face was a curious sight. The smile she had forced gave place to a marble rigidity; the old statuesqueness which had melted to flesh and blood stiffened her features again. "Thank you . . . I'm afraid I never think . . ."

"No, you never do; that's the trouble!" Mrs. Brown shot an arch glance at me. "With her looks, oughtn't she to think? But perhaps it's lucky for the rest of us poor women she don't—eh, Stevie?"

The colour rushed to Mrs. Glenn's face; she was going to retort; to snub the dreadful woman. But the new softness had returned, and she merely lifted a warning finger. "Oh, don't, please . . . speak to him. Can't you see that he's fallen asleep?"

O great King Solomon, I thought—and bowed my soul before the mystery.

I spent a fortnight at Les Calanques, and every day my perplexity deepened. The most conversible member of the little group was undoubtedly Stephen. Mrs. Glenn was as she had always been; beautiful, benevolent and inarticulate. When she sat on the beach beside the dozing Stephen, in her flowing white dress, her large white umbrella tilted to shelter him, she reminded me of a carven angel spreading broad wings above a tomb (I could never look at her without being reminded of statuary); and to converse with a marble angel so engaged can never have been easy. But I was perhaps not wrong in suspecting that her smiling silence concealed a reluctance to talk about the Browns. Like many perfectly unegotistical women Catherine Glenn had no subject of conversation except her own affairs; and these at present so visibly hinged on the Browns that it was easy to see why silence was simpler.

Mrs. Brown, I may as well confess, bored me acutely. She was a perfect specimen of the middle-aged flapper with layers and layers of hard-headed feminine craft under her romping ways. All this I suffered from chiefly because I knew it was making Mrs. Glenn suffer. But after all it was thanks to Mrs. Brown that she had found her son; Mrs. Brown had brought up Stephen, had made him (one was obliged to suppose) the whimsical dreamy charming creature he was; and again and again, when Mrs. Brown outdid herself in girlish archness or middle-aged craft, Mrs. Glenn's wounded eyes said to mine: "Look at Stephen; isn't that enough?"

Certainly it was enough; enough even to excuse Mr. Brown's jocular allusions and arid anecdotes, his boredom at Les Calanques, and the too liberal potations in which he drowned it. Mr. Brown, I may add, was not half as trying as his wife. For the first two or three days I was mildly diverted by his contempt for the quiet watering-place in which his women had confined him, and his lordly conception of the life of pleasure as exemplified by intimacy with the head-waiters of gilt-edged restaurants and the lavishing of large sums on horse-racing and cards. "Damn it, Norcutt, I'm not used to being mewed up in this kind of place. Perhaps it's different with you—all depends on a man's standards, don't it? Now before I lost my money—" and so on. The odd thing was that, though this loss of fortune played a large part in the conversation of both husband and wife, I never somehow believed in it—I mean in the existence of the fortune. I hinted as much one day to Mrs. Glenn, but she only opened her noble eyes reproachfully, as if I had implied that it discredited the Browns to dream of a fortune they had never had. "They tell me Stephen was brought up with every luxury. And besides—their own tastes seem rather expensive, don't they?" she argued gently.

"That's the very reason."

"The reason——?"

"The only people I know who are totally without expensive tastes are the overwhelmingly wealthy. You see it when you visit palaces. They sleep on camp-beds and live on boiled potatoes."

Mrs. Glenn smiled. "Stevie wouldn't have liked that."

Stephen smiled also when I alluded to these past splendours. "It must have been before I cut my first teeth. I know Boy's always talking about it; but I've got to take it on faith, just as you have."

"Boy——?"

"Didn't you know? He's always called 'Boy.' Boydon Brown—abbreviated by friends and family to 'Boy.' The Boy Browns. Suits them, doesn't it?"

It did; but I was not sure that it suited him to say so.

"And you've always addressed your adopted father in that informal style?"

"Lord, yes; nobody's formal with Boy except head-waiters. They bow down to him; I don't know why. He's got the manner. I haven't. When I go to a restaurant they always give me the worst table and the stupidest waiter." He leaned back against the sand-bank and blinked contentedly seaward. "Got a cigarette?"

"You know you oughtn't to smoke," I protested.

"I know; but I do." He held out a lean hand with prominent knuckles. "As long as Kit's not about." He called the marble angel, his mother, "Kit"! And yet I was not offended—I let him do it just as I let him have one of my cigarettes. If "Boy" had a way with head-waiters his adopted son undoubtedly had one with lesser beings; his smile, his faint hoarse laugh, would have made me do his will even if his talk had not conquered me. We sat for hours on the sands, discussing and dreaming; not always undisturbed, for Mrs. Brown had a tiresome way of hovering and "listening in," as she archly called it—("I don't want Stevie to depreciate his poor ex-mamma to you," she explained one day); and whenever Mrs. Brown (who, even at Les Calanques, had contrived to create a social round for herself) was bathing, dancing, playing bridge, or being waved, massaged or manicured, the other mother, assuring herself from an upper window that the coast was clear, would descend in her gentle majesty

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and turn our sand-bank into a throne by sitting on it. But now and then Stephen and I had a half-hour to ourselves; and then I tried to lead his talk to the past.

He seemed willing enough that I should, but uninterested, and unable to recover many details. "I never can remember things that don't matter—and so far nothing about me has mattered," he said with a humorous melancholy. "I mean, not till I struck mother Kit."

He had vague recollections of continental travels as a little boy; had afterward been at a private school in Switzerland; had tried to pass himself off as a Canadian volunteer in 1915, and in 1917 to enlist in the American army, but had failed in each case—one had only to look at him to see why. The war over, he had worked for a time at Julian's, and then broken down; and after that it had been a hard row to hoe till mother Kit came along. By George, but he'd never forget what she'd done for him—never!

"Well, it's a way mothers have with their sons," I remarked.

He flushed under his bronze tanning, and said simply: "Yes—only you see I didn't know."

His view of the Browns, while not unkindly, was so detached that I suspected him of regarding his own mother with the same objectivity; but when he spoke of her there was a different note in his voice. "I didn't know"—it was a new experience to him to be really mothered. As a type, however, she clearly puzzled him. He was too sensitive to class her (as the Browns obviously did) as a simple-minded woman to whom nothing had ever happened; but he could not conceive what sort of things could happen to a woman of her kind. I gathered that she had explained the strange episode of his adoption by telling him that at the time of his birth she had been "secretly married"—poor Catherine!—to his father, and that "family circumstances" had made it needful to conceal his existence till the marriage could be announced; by which time he had vanished with his adopted parents. I guessed how it must have puzzled Stephen to adapt this ingenuous tale to what, in the light of Mrs. Glenn's character, he could make out of her past. Of obvious explanations there were plenty; but none fitted into his vision of her. For a moment (I could see) he had imagined a sentimental tie between her and myself; but this his quick perceptions soon discarded, and he apparently resigned himself to thinking of her as inscrutably proud and incorrigibly perfect. "I'd like to paint her some day—if ever I'm fit to," he said; and I wondered whether this applied to his moral or physical deficiencies.

By the doctor's orders he had dropped his painting altogether since his last breakdown; but it was manifestly the one thing he cared for, and perhaps the only reason he had for wanting to get well. "When you've dropped to a certain level it's so damnably easy to keep on till you're altogether down and out. So much easier than dragging up hill again. But I do want to get well enough to paint mother Kit. She's a subject."

One day it rained, and he was confined to the house. I went up to sit with him, and he got out some of his sketches and studies. Instantly he was transformed from an amiably mocking dilettante to an absorbed and passionate professional. "This is the only life I've ever had. All the rest—!" he made a grimace that turned his thin face into a death's-head. "Cinders!"

The studies were brilliant—there was no doubt of that. The question was—the eternal question—what would they turn into when he was well enough to finish them? For the moment the problem did not present itself, and I could praise and encourage him in all sincerity. My words brought a glow into his face, but also, as it turned out, sent up his temperature. Mrs. Glenn reproached me mildly; she begged me not to let him get excited about his pictures. I promised not to, and reassured on that point she asked if I didn't think he had talent—real talent? "Very great talent, yes," I assured her; and she burst into tears—not of grief or agitation, but of a deep upwelling joy. "Oh, what have I done to deserve it all—to deserve such happiness? Yet I always knew if I could find him he'd make me happy!" She caught both my hands, and pressed her wet cheek on mine. That was one of her unclouded hours.

There were others not so radiant. I could see that the Browns were straining at the leash. With the seductions of Juan-les-Pins and Antibes in the offing, why, their frequent allusions implied, should they be marooned at Les Calanques? Of course, for one thing, Mrs. Brown admitted, she hadn't the clothes to show herself on a smart *plage*. Though so few were worn they had to come from the big dress-makers; and the latter's charges, everybody knew, were in inverse ratio to the amount of material used. "So that to be really naked is ruinous," she concluded, laughing; and I saw the narrowing of Catherine's lips. As for Mr. Brown, he added morosely that if a man couldn't take a hand at baccarat, or offer his friends something decent to eat and drink, it was better to vegetate at Les Calanques, and be done with it. Only, when a fellow'd been used to having plenty of money . . .

I saw at once what had happened. Mrs. Glenn, whose material wants did not extend beyond the best plumbing and expensive clothes (and the latter were made to do for three seasons), did not fully understand the Browns' aspirations. Her fortune, though adequate, was not large, and she had settled on Stephen's adoptive parents an allowance which, converted into francs, made a generous showing. It was obvious, however, that what they hoped was to get more money. There had been debts in the background, perhaps; who knew but the handsome Stephen had had his share in them? One day I suggested discreetly to Mrs. Glenn that if she wished to be alone with her son she might offer the Browns a trip to Juan-les-Pins or some such centre of gaiety. But I pointed out that the precedent might be dangerous, and advised her first to consult Stephen. "I suspect he's as anxious to have them go as you are," I said recklessly; and her flush of pleasure rewarded me. "Oh, you mustn't say that," she reproved me, laughing; and added that she would think over my advice. I am not sure if she did consult Stephen but she offered the Browns a holiday, and they accepted it without false pride.

VI

After my departure from Les Calanques I had no news of Mrs. Glenn till she returned to Paris in October.

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Then she begged me to call at the hotel where I had previously seen her, and where she was now staying with Stephen—and the Browns.

She suggested, rather mysteriously, my dining with her on a particular evening, when, as she put it, "everybody" would be out; and when I arrived she explained that Stephen had gone to the country for the week-end, with some old comrades from Julian's, and that the Browns were dining at a smart night-club in Montmartre. "So we'll have a quiet time all by ourselves." She added that Steve was so much better that he was trying his best to persuade her to spend the winter in Paris, and let him get back to his painting; but in spite of the good news I thought she looked worn and dissatisfied.

I was surprised to find the Browns still with her, and told her so.

"Well, you see, it's difficult," she returned with a troubled frown. "They love Stephen so much that they won't give him up; and how can I blame them? What are my rights, compared with theirs?"

Finding this hard to answer, I put another question. "Did you enjoy your quiet time with Stephen while they were at Juan-les-Pins?"

"Oh, they didn't go; at least Mrs. Brown didn't—Chrissy she likes me to call her," Mrs. Glenn corrected herself hurriedly. "She couldn't bear to leave Steve."

"So she sacrificed Juan-les-Pins, and that handsome cheque?"

"Not the cheque; she kept that. Boy went," Mrs. Glenn added apologetically. Boy and Chrissy—it had to come to that! I looked away from my old friend's troubled face before putting my next question. "And Stephen——?"

"Well, I can't exactly tell how he feels. But I sometimes think he'd like to be alone with me." A passing radiance smoothed away her frown. "He's hinted that, if we decide to stay here, they might be tempted by winter sports and go to the Engadine later."

"So that they would have the benefit of the high air instead of Stephen?" She coloured a little, looked down, and then smiled at me. "What can I do?"

I resolved to sound Stephen on his adopted parents. The present situation would have to be put an end to somehow; but it had puzzling elements. Why had Mrs. Brown refused to go to Juan-les-Pins? Was it, as I had suspected, because there were debts, and more pressing uses for the money? Or was it that she was so much attached to her adopted son as to be jealous of his mother's influence? This was far more to be feared; but it did not seem to fit in with what I knew of Mrs. Brown. The trouble was that what I knew was so little. Mrs. Brown, though in one way so intelligible, was in another as cryptic to me as Catherine Glenn was to Stephen. The surface was transparent enough, but what did the blur beneath conceal? Troubled waters, or just a mud-flat? My only hope was to try to get Stephen to tell me.

Stephen had hired a studio—against his doctor's advice, I gathered—and spent most of his hours there, in the company of his old group of painting friends. Mrs. Glenn had been there once or twice, but in spite of his being so sweet and dear to her she had felt herself in the way—as she undoubtedly was. "I can't keep up with their talk, you know," she explained. With whose talk could she, poor angel?

I suggested that, for the few weeks of their Paris sojourn, it would be kinder to let Stephen have his fling; and she agreed. Afterward, in the mountains, he could recuperate; youth had such powers of self-healing. But I urged her to insist on his spending another winter in the Engadine; not at one of the big fashionable places——

She interrupted me. "I'm afraid Boy and Chrissy wouldn't like——"

"Oh, for God's sake; can't you give Boy and Chrissy another cheque, and send them off to Egypt, or to Monte Carlo?"

She hesitated. "I could try; but I don't believe she'd go. Not without Stevie."

"And what does Stevie say?"

"What can he say? She brought him up. She was there—all the years when I'd failed him."

It was unanswerable, and I felt the uselessness of any advice I could give. The situation could be changed only by some internal readjustment. Still, out of pity for the poor mother, I determined to try a word with Stephen. She gave me the address of his studio, and the next day I went there.

It was in a smart-looking modern building in the Montparnasse quarter; lofty, well-lit and well-warmed. What a contrast to his earlier environment! I climbed to his door, rang the bell and waited. There were sounds of moving about within, but as no one came, I rang again; and finally Stephen opened the door. His face lit up pleasantly when he saw me. "Oh, it's you, my dear fellow!" But I caught a trace of constraint in his voice.

"I'm not in the way? Don't mind throwing me out if I am."

"I've got a sitter—" he began, visibly hesitating.

"Oh, in that case——"

"No, no; it's only—the fact is, it's Chrissy. I was trying to do a study of her——"

He led me across the passage and into the studio. It was large and flooded with light. Divans against the walls; big oak tables; shaded lamps, a couple of tall screens. From behind one of them emerged Mrs. Brown, hatless and slim, in a pale summer-like frock, her chestnut hair becomingly tossed about her eyes. "Dear Mr. Norcutt. So glad you turned up! I was getting such a stiff neck—Stephen's merciless."

"May I see the result?" I asked; and "Oh, no," she protested in mock terror, "it's too frightful—it really is. I think he thought he was doing a *nature morte*—lemons and a bottle of beer, or something!"

"It's not fit for inspection," Stephen agreed.

The room was spacious, and not overcrowded. Glancing about, I could see only one easel with a painting on it. Stephen went up and turned the canvas face inward, with the familiar gesture of the artist who does not wish to challenge attention. But before he did so I had remarked that the painting was neither a portrait of Mrs. Brown nor a still-life. It was a rather brilliant three-quarter sketch of a woman's naked back and hips. A model, no doubt—but why did he wish to conceal it?

"I'm so glad you came," Mrs. Brown repeated, smiling intensely. I stood still, hoping she was about to go; but she dropped down on one of the divans, tossing back her tumbled curls. "He works too hard, you know; I wish you'd tell him so. Steve, come and stretch out," she commanded, indicat-

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ing the other end of the divan. "You ought to take a good nap."

The hint was so obvious that I said: "In that case I'd better come another time."

"No, no; wait till I give you a cocktail. We all need cock-tails. Where's the shaker, darling?" Mrs. Brown was on her feet again, alert and gay. She dived behind the screen which had previously concealed her, and reappeared with the necessary appliances. "Push up that little table, Mr. Norcutt, please. Oh, I know—dear Kit doesn't approve of cock-tails; and she's right. But look at him—dead beat! If he will slave at his painting, what's he to do? I was scolding him about it when you came in."

The shaker danced in her flashing hands, and in a trice she was holding a glass out to me, and another to Stephen, who had obediently flung himself down on the divan. As he took the glass she bent and laid her lips on his damp hair. "You bad boy, you!"

I looked at Stephen. "You ought to get out of this, and start straight off for Switzerland," I admonished him.

"Oh, hell," he groaned. "Can't you get Kit to drop all that?"

Mrs. Brown made an impatient gesture. "Isn't he too foolish? Of course he ought to go away. He looks like nothing on earth. But his only idea of Switzerland is one of those awful places we had to go to because they were cheap, where there's nothing to do in the evening but to sit with clergymen's wives looking at stereopticon views of glaciers. I tell him he'll love St. Moritz. There's a thrill there every minute."

Stephen closed his eyes and sank his head back in the cushions without speaking. His face was drawn and weary; I was startled at the change in him since we had parted at Les Calanques.

Mrs. Brown, following my glance, met it with warning brows and a finger on her painted lips. It was like a parody of Mrs. Glenn's maternal gesture, and I perceived that it meant: "Can't you see that he's falling asleep? Do be tactful and slip out without disturbing him."

What could I do but obey? A moment later the studio door had closed on me, and I was going down the long flights of stairs. The worst of it was that I was not at all sure that Stephen was really asleep.

VII

The next morning I received a telephone call from Stephen asking me to lunch. We met at a quiet restaurant near his studio, and when, after an admirably chosen meal, we settled down to coffee and cigars, he said carelessly: "Sorry you got thrown out that way yesterday."

"Oh, well—I saw you were tired, and I didn't want to interfere with your nap."

He looked down moodily at his plate. "Tired—yes, I'm tired. But I didn't want a nap. I merely simulated slumber to try and shut Chrissy up."

"Ah—" I said.

He shot a quick look at me, almost resentfully, I thought. Then he went on: "There are times when aimless talk nearly kills me. I wonder," he broke out suddenly, "if you can realize what it feels like for a man who's never—I mean for an orphan—suddenly to find himself with two mothers?"

I said I could see it might be arduous.

"Arduous! It's literally asphyxiating." He frowned, and then smiled whimsically. "When I need all the fresh air I can get!"

"My dear fellow—what you need first of all is to get away from cities and studios."

His frown deepened. "I know; I know all that. Only, you see—well, to begin with, before I turn up my toes I want to do something for mother Kit."

"Do something?"

"Something to show her that I was—was worth all this fuss." He paused, and turned his coffee-spoon absently between his long twitching fingers.

I shrugged. "Whatever you do, she'll always think that. Mothers do."

He murmured after me slowly: "Mothers——"

"What she wants you to do now is to get well," I insisted.

"Yes; I know; I'm pledged to get well. But somehow that bargain doesn't satisfy me. If I don't get well I want to leave something behind me that'll make her think: 'If he'd lived a little longer he'd have pulled it off.'"

"If you left a gallery of masterpieces it wouldn't help her much."

His face clouded, and he looked at me wistfully. "What the devil else can I do?"

"Go to Switzerland, and let yourself be bored there for a whole winter. Then you can come back and paint, and enjoy your success instead of having the enjoyment done for you by your heirs."

"Oh, what a large order—" he sighed, and drew out his cigarettes.

For a moment we were both silent; then he raised his eyes and looked straight at me. "Supposing I don't get well, there's another thing . . ." He hesitated a moment. "Do you happen to know if my mother has made her will?"

I imagine my look must have surprised him, for he hurried on: "It's only this: if I should drop out—you never can tell—there are Chrissy and Boy, poor helpless devils. I can't forget what they've been to me . . . done for me . . . though sometimes I daresay I seem ungrateful . . ."

I listened to his embarrassed phrases with an embarrassment at least as great. "You may be sure your mother won't forget either," I said.

"No; I suppose not. Of course not. Only sometimes—you can see for yourself that things are a little breezy . . . They feel that perhaps she doesn't always remember for how many years . . ." He brought the words out as though he were reciting a lesson. "I can't forget it, of course," he added, painfully.

I glanced at my watch and stood up. I wanted to spare him the evident effort of going on. "Mr. and Mrs. Brown's tastes don't always agree with your mother's. That's evident. If you could persuade them to go off somewhere—or to lead more independent lives when they're with her—mightn't that help?"

He cast a despairing glance at me. "Lord—I wish you'd try! But you see they're anxious—anxious about their future . . ."

"I'm sure they needn't be," I answered shortly, more and more impatient to make an end.

His face lit up with a suddenness that hurt me. "Oh, well—it's sure to be all right if you say so. Of course you know."

"I know your mother," I said, holding out my hand for goodbye.

VIII

Shortly after my lunch with Stephen Glenn I was unexpectedly detached

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from my job in Paris and sent on a special mission to the other side of the world. I was sorry to bid goodbye to Mrs. Glenn, but relieved to be rid of the thankless task of acting as her counsellor. Not that she herself was not thankful, poor soul; but the situation abounded in problems, to not one of which could I find a solution, and I was embarrassed by her simple faith in my ability to do so. "Get rid of the Browns; pension them off," I could only repeat; but since my talk with Stephen I had little hope of his mother's acting on this suggestion. "You'll probably all end up together at St. Moritz," I prophesied; and a few months later a belated Paris *Herald,* overtaking me in my remote corner of the globe, informed me that among the guests of the new Ice Palace Hotel at St. Moritz were Mrs. Glenn of New York, Mr. Stephen Glenn, and Mr. and Mrs. Boydon Brown. From succeeding numbers of the same sheet I learned that Mr. and Mrs. Boydon Brown were among those entertaining on the opening night of the new Restaurant des Glaciers, that the Boydon Brown cup for the most original costume at the Annual Fancy Ball of the Skiers' Club had been won by Miss Thora Dacy (costume designed by the well-known artist, Stephen Glenn), and that Mr. Boydon Brown had been one of the stewards of the dinner given to the participants in the ice-hockey match between the St. Moritz and Suvretta teams. And on such items I was obliged to nourish my memory of my friends, for no direct news came to me from any of them.

When I bade Mrs. Glenn goodbye I had told her that I had hopes of a post in the State Department at the close of my temporary mission, and she said, a little wistfully: "How wonderful if we could meet next year in America! As soon as Stephen is strong enough I want him to come back and live with me in his father's house." This seemed a natural wish; and it struck me that it might also be the means of effecting a break with the Browns. But Mrs. Glenn shook her head. "Chrissy says a winter in New York would amuse them both tremendously."

I was not so sure that it would amuse Stephen, and therefore did not base much hope on the plan. The one thing Stephen wanted was to get back to Paris and paint: it would presumably be his mother's lot to settle down there when his health permitted.

I heard nothing more until I got back to Washington the following spring; then I had a line from Stephen. The winter in the Engadine had been a deadly bore, but had really done him good, and his mother was just leaving for Paris to look for an apartment. She meant to take one on a long lease, and have the furniture of the New York house sent out—it would be jolly getting it arranged. As for him, the doctors said he was well enough to go on with his painting, and, as I knew, it was the one thing he cared for; so I might cast off all anxiety about the family. That was all—and perhaps I should have obeyed if Mrs. Glenn had also written. But no word, no message even, came from her; and as she always wrote when there was good news to give, her silence troubled me.

It was in the course of the same summer, during a visit to Bar Harbour, that one evening, dining with a friend, I found myself next to a slight pale girl with large gray eyes who suddenly turned them on me reproachfully. "Then you don't know me? I'm Thora."

I looked my perplexity, and she added: "Aren't you Steve Glenn's great friend? He's always talking of you." My memory struggled with a tangle of oddments, from which I finally extricated the phrase in the *Herald* about Miss Thora Dacy and the fancy-dress ball at St. Moritz. "You're the young lady who won the Boydon Brown prize in a costume designed by the well-known artist, Mr. Stephen Glenn!"

Her charming face fell. "If you know me only through that newspaper rubbish . . . I had an idea the well-known artist might have told you about me."

"He's not much of a correspondent."

"No; but I thought——"

"Why don't you tell me yourself instead?"

Dinner was over, and the company had moved out to a wide starlit verandah looking seaward. I found a corner for two, and installed myself there with my new friend, who was also Stephen's. "I like him awfully—don't you?" she began at once. I liked her way of saying it; I liked her direct gaze; I found myself thinking: "But this may turn out to be the solution!" For I felt sure that, if circumstances ever gave her the right to take part in the coming struggle over Stephen, Thora Dacy would be on the side of the angels.

As if she had guessed my thought she continued: "And I do love Mrs. Glenn too—don't you?"

I assured her that I did, and she added: "And Steve loves her—I'm sure he does!"

"Well, if he didn't—!" I exclaimed indignantly.

"That's the way I feel; he ought to. Only, you see, Mrs. Brown—the Browns adopted him when he was a baby, didn't they, and brought him up as if he'd been their own child? I suppose they must know him better than any of us do; and Mrs. Brown says he can't help feeling bitter about—I don't know all the circumstances, but his mother did desert him soon after he was born, didn't she? And if it hadn't been for the Browns——"

"The Browns—the Browns! It's a pity they don't leave it to other people to proclaim their merits! And I don't believe Stephen does feel as they'd like you to think. If he does, he ought to be kicked. If—if complicated family reasons obliged Mrs. Glenn to separate herself from him when he was a baby, the way she mourned for him all those years, and her devotion since they've come together again, have atoned a thousandfold for that old unhappiness; and no one knows it better than Stephen."

The girl received this without protesting. "I'm so glad—so glad." There was a new vibration in her voice; she looked up gravely. "I've always *wanted* to love Mrs. Glenn the best."

"Well, you'd better; especially if you love Stephen."

"Oh, I do love him," she said simply. "But of course I understand his feeling as he does about the Browns."

I hesitated, not knowing how to answer the question I detected under this; but at length I said: "Stephen, at any rate, must feel that Mrs. Brown has no business to insinuate anything against his mother. He ought to put a stop to that." She met the suggestion with a sigh, and stood up to join another group. "Thora Dacy may yet

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save us!" I thought, as my gaze followed her light figure across the room.

I had half a mind to write of that meeting to Stephen or to his mother; but the weeks passed while I procrastinated, and one day I received a note from Stephen. He wrote (with many messages from Mrs. Glenn) to give me their new address, and to tell me that he was hard at work at his painting, and doing a "promising portrait of mother Kit." He signed himself my affectionate Steve, and added underneath: "So glad you've come across little Thora. She took a most tremendous shine to you. Do please be nice to her; she's a dear child. But don't encourage any illusions about me, please; marrying's not in my programme." "So that's that," I thought, and tore the letter up rather impatiently. I wondered if Thora Dacy already knew that her illusions were not to be encouraged.

IX

The months went by, and I heard no more from my friends. Summer came round again, and with it the date of my six weeks' holiday, which I purposed to take that year in Europe. Two years had passed since I had last seen Mrs. Glenn, and during that time I had received only two or three brief notes from her, thanking me for Christmas wishes, or telling me that Stephen was certainly better, though he would take no care of himself. But several months had passed since the date of her last report.

I had meant to spend my vacation in a trip in south-western France, and on the way over I decided to invite Stephen Glenn to join me. I therefore made direct for Paris, and the next morning rang him up at Mrs. Glenn's. Mrs. Brown's voice met me in reply, informing me that Stephen was no longer living with his mother. "Read the riot act to us all a few months ago —said he wanted to be independent. You know his fads. Dear Catherine was foolishly upset. As I said to her . . . yes, I'll give you his address; but poor Steve's not well just now . . . Oh, go on a trip with you? No; I'm afraid there's no chance of that. The truth is, he told us he didn't want to be bothered —rather warned us off the premises; even poor old Boy; and you know he adores Boy. I haven't seen him myself for several days. But you can try . . . oh, of course, you can try . . . No; I'm afraid you can't see Catherine either—not just at present. She's been ill too—feverish; worrying about her naughty Steve, I suspect. I'm mounting guard for a few days, and not letting her see anybody till her temperature goes down. And would you do me a favour? Don't write—don't let her know you're here. Not for a day or two, I mean . . . She'd be so distressed at not being able to see you . . ."

She rang off, and left me to draw my own conclusions.

They were not of the pleasantest. I was perplexed by the apparent sequestration of both my friends, still more so by the disquieting mystery of Mrs. Glenn's remaining with the Browns while Stephen had left them. Why had she not followed her son? Was it because she had not been allowed to? I conjectured that Mrs. Brown, knowing I was likely to put these questions to the persons concerned, was manœuvring to prevent my seeing them. If she could manœuvre, so could I; but for the moment I had to consider what line to take. The fact of her giving me Stephen's address made me suspect that she had taken measures to prevent my seeing him; and if that were so there was not much use in making the attempt. And Mrs. Glenn was in bed, and "feverish," and not to be told of my arrival . . .

After a day's pondering I reflected that telegrams sometimes penetrate where letters fail to, and decided to telegraph to Stephen. No reply came; but the following afternoon, as I was leaving my hotel, a taxi drove up and Mrs. Glenn descended from it. She was dressed in black, with many hanging scarves and veils, as if she either feared the air or the searching eye of some one who might be interested in her movements. But for her white hair and heavy stooping lines she might have suggested the furtive figure of a young woman stealing to her lover. But when I looked at her the analogy seemed a profanation.

To women of Catherine Glenn's ripe beauty thinness gives a sudden look of age; and the face she raised to me among her thrown-back veils was emaciated. Illness and anxiety had scarred her as years and weather scar some beautiful still image on a church-front. She took my hand, and I led her into the empty reading-room. "You've been ill!" I said.

"Not very; just a bad cold." It was characteristic that while she looked at me with grave beseeching eyes her words were trivial, ordinary. "Chrissy's so devoted—takes such care of me. She was afraid to have me go out. The weather's so unsettled, isn't it? But really I'm all right; and as it cleared this morning I just ran off for a minute to see you." The entreaty in her eyes became a prayer. "Only don't tell her, will you? Dear Steve's been ill too—did you know? And so I just slipped out while Chrissy went to see him. She sees him nearly every day, and brings me the news." She gave a sigh and added, hardly above a whisper: "He sent me your address. She doesn't know."

I listened with a sense of vague oppression. Why this mystery, this watching, these evasions? Was it because Steve was not allowed to write to me that he had smuggled my address to his mother? Mystery clung about us in damp fog-like coils, like the scarves and veils about Mrs. Glenn's thin body. But I knew that I must let my visitor tell her tale in her own way, and, of course, when it was told, most of the mystery subsisted, for she was in it, enveloped in it, blinded by it. I gathered, however, that Stephen had been very unhappy. He had met a St. Moritz girl whom he wanted to marry: Thora Dacy—ah, I'd heard of her, I'd met her? Mrs. Glenn's face lit up. She had thought the child lovely; she had known the family in Washington—excellent people; she had been so happy in the prospect of Stephen's happiness. And then something had happened . . . she didn't know, she had an idea that Chrissy hadn't liked the girl. The reason Stephen gave was that in his state of health he oughtn't to marry; but at the time he'd been perfectly well—the doctors had assured his mother that his lungs were sound, and that there was no likelihood of a relapse. She couldn't imagine why he should have had such scruples—still less why Chrissy should have encouraged them. For Chrissy had

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also put it on the ground of health; she had approved his decision. And since then he had been unsettled, irritable, difficult—oh, very difficult. Two or three months ago the state of tension in which they had all been living had reached a climax; Mrs. Glenn couldn't say how or why—it was still obscure to her. But she suspected that Stephen had quarrelled with the Browns. They had patched it up now, they saw each other; but for a time there had been something wrong. And suddenly Stephen had left the apartment, moved into a wretched studio in a shabby quarter. The only reason he gave for leaving was that he had too many mothers—that was a joke, of course, Mrs. Glenn explained . . . but her eyes filled as she said it.

Poor mother—and, alas, poor Stephen! All the sympathy I could spare from the mother went to the son. He had behaved harshly, cruelly, no doubt; the young do; but under what provocation! I understood his saying that he had too many mothers; and I suspected that what he had tried for—and failed to achieve—was a break with the Browns. Trust Chrissy to baffle that attempt, I thought bitterly; she had obviously deflected the dispute, and made the consequences fall upon his mother. And at bottom everything was unchanged.

Unchanged—except for that thickening of the fog. At the moment it was almost as impenetrable to me as to Mrs. Glenn. Certain things I could understand that she could not; for instance, why Stephen had left home. I could guess that the atmosphere had become unbreathable. But if so, it was certainly Mrs. Brown's doing, and what interest had she in sowing discord between Stephen and his mother? With a cold shock of apprehension my mind reverted to Stephen's enquiry about his mother's will. It had offended me at the time; now it really frightened me. If I was right in suspecting that he had tried to break with his adopted parents—over the question of the will, no doubt, or at any rate over their general selfishness and rapacity—then his attempt had failed, since he and the Browns were still on good terms, and the only result of the dispute had been to separate him from his mother. At the thought my indignation burned afresh. "I mean to see Stephen," I declared, looking resolutely at Mrs. Glenn.

"But he's not well enough, I'm afraid; he told me to send you his love, and to say that perhaps when you come back——"

"Ah, you've seen him, then?"

She shook her head. "No; he telegraphed me this morning. He doesn't even write any longer." Her eyes filled, and she looked away from me.

He, too, used the telegraph! It gave me more to think about than poor Mrs. Glenn could know. I continued to look at her. "Don't you want to send him a telegram in return? You could write it here, and give it to me," I suggested. She hesitated, seemed half to assent, and then stood up abruptly.

"No; I'd better not. Chrissy takes my messages. If I telegraphed she might wonder—she might be hurt——"

"Yes; I see."

"But I must be off; I've stayed too long." She cast a nervous glance at her watch. "When you come back . . ." she repeated.

When we reached the door of the hotel rain was falling, and I drew her back into the vestibule while the porter went to call a taxi. "Why haven't you your own motor?" I asked.

"Oh, Chrissy wanted the motor. She had to go to see Stevie—and of course she didn't know I should be going out. You won't tell her, will you?" Mrs. Glenn cried back to me entreatingly as the door of the taxi closed on her.

The taxi drove off, and I was standing on the pavement looking after it when a handsomely appointed private motor glided up to the hotel. The chauffeur sprang down, and I recognized him as the man who had driven Mrs. Glenn when we had been together at Les Calanques. I was therefore not surprised to see Mrs. Brown, golden-haired and slim, descending under his unfurled umbrella. She held a note in her hand, and looked at me with a start of surprise. "What luck! I was going to try to find out when you were likely to be in—and here you are! Concierges are always so secretive that I'd written as well." She held the envelope up with her brilliant smile. "Am I butting in? Or may I come and have a talk?"

I led her to the reading-room which Mrs. Glenn had so lately left, and suggested the cup of tea which I had forgotten to offer to her predecessor.

She made a gay grimace. "Tea? Oh, no—thanks. Perhaps we might go round to the Nouveau Luxe grill for a cock-tail. But it's rather early yet; there's nobody there at this hour. And I want to talk to you about Stevie."

She settled herself in Mrs. Glenn's corner, and as she sat there, slender and alert in her perfectly-cut dark coat and skirt, with her silver fox slung at the exact fashion-plate angle, I felt the irony of these two women succeeding each other in the same seat to talk to me on the same subject. Mrs. Brown groped in her bag for a jade cigarette-case, and lifted her smiling eyes to mine. "Catherine's just been here, hasn't she? I passed her in a taxi at the corner," she remarked lightly.

"She's been here; yes. I scolded her for not being in her own motor," I rejoined, with an attempt at the same tone.

Mrs. Brown laughed. "I knew you would! But I'd taken the motor on purpose to prevent her going out. She has a very bad cold, as I told you; and the doctor has absolutely forbidden——"

"Then why didn't you let me go to see her?"

"Because the doctor forbids her to see visitors. I told you that too. Didn't you notice how hoarse she is?"

I felt my anger rising. "I noticed how unhappy she is," I said bluntly.

"Oh, unhappy—why is she unhappy? If I were in her place I should just lie back and enjoy life," said Mrs. Brown, with a sort of cold impatience.

"She's unhappy about Stephen."

Mrs. Brown looked at me quickly. "She came here to tell you so, I suppose? Well—he has behaved badly."

"Why did you let him?"

She laughed again, this time ironically. "Let him? Ah, you believe in that legend? The legend that I do what I like with Stephen." She bent her head to light another cigarette. "He's behaved just as badly to me, my good man—and to Boy. And *we* don't go about complaining!"

"Why should you, when you see him every day?"

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At this she bridled, with a flitting smile. "Can I help it—if it's me he wants?"

"Yes, I believe you can," I said resolutely.

"Oh, thanks! I suppose I ought to take that as a compliment."

"Take it as you like. Why don't you make Stephen see his mother?"

"Dear Mr. Norcutt, if I had any influence over Stephen, do you suppose I'd let him quarrel with his bread-and-butter? To put it on utilitarian grounds, why should I?" She lifted her clear shallow eyes and looked straight into mine—and I found no answer. There was something impenetrable to me beneath that shallowness.

"But why did Stephen leave his mother?" I persisted.

She shrugged, and looked down at her rings, among which I fancied I saw a new one, a dark luminous stone in claws of platinum. She caught my glance. "You're admiring my brown diamond? A beauty, isn't it? Dear Catherine gave it to me for Christmas. The angel! Do you suppose I wouldn't do anything to spare her all this misery? I wish I could tell you why Stephen left her. Perhaps . . . perhaps because she *is* such an angel . . . Young men—you understand? She was always wrapping him up, lying awake to listen for his latch-key . . . Steve's rather a Bohemian; suddenly he struck—that's all I know."

I saw at once that this contained a shred of truth wrapped round an inaccessible lie; and I saw also that to tell that lie had not been Mrs. Brown's main object. She had come for a still deeper reason, and I could only wait for her to reveal it.

She glanced up reproachfully. "How hard you are on me—always! From the very first day—don't I know? And never more than now. Don't you suppose I can guess what you're thinking? You're accusing me of trying to prevent your seeing Catherine; and in reality I came here to ask you to see her—to beg you to—as soon as she's well enough. If you'd only trusted me, instead of persuading her to slip off on the sly and come here in this awful weather . . ."

It was on the tip of my tongue to declare that I was guiltless of such perfidy; but it occurred to me that my visitor might be trying to find out how Mrs. Glenn had known I was in Paris, and I decided to say nothing.

"At any rate, if she's no worse I'm sure she could see you tomorrow. Why not come and dine? I'll carry Boy off to a restaurant, and you and she can have a cosy evening together, like old times. You'd like that, wouldn't you?" Mrs. Brown's face was veiled with a retrospective emotion; I saw that, less acute than Stephen, she still believed in a sentimental past between myself and Catherine Glenn. "She must have been one of the loveliest creatures that ever lived—wasn't she? Even now no one can come up to her. You don't know how I wish she liked me better; that she had more confidence in me. If she had, she'd know that I love Stephen as much as she does—perhaps more. For so many years he was mine, all mine! But it's all so difficult—at this moment, for instance . . ." She paused, jerked her silver fox back into place, and gave me a prolonged view of meditative lashes. At last she said: "Perhaps you don't know that Steve's final folly has been to refuse his allowance. He returned the last cheque to Catherine with a dreadful letter."

"Dreadful? How?"

"Telling her he was old enough to shift for himself—that he refused to sell his independence any longer; perfect madness."

"Atrocious cruelty——"

"Yes; that too. I told him so. But do you realize the result?" The lashes, suddenly lifted, gave me the full appeal of wide transparent eyes. "Steve's starving—voluntarily starving himself. Or would be, if Boy and I hadn't scraped together our last pennies . . ."

"If independence is what he wants, why should he take your pennies when he won't take his mother's?"

"Ah—there's the point. He will." She looked down again, fretting her rings. "Ill as he is, how could he live if he didn't take somebody's pennies? If I could sell my brown diamond without Catherine's missing it I'd have done it long ago, and you need never have known of all this. But she's so sensitive—and she notices everything. She literally spies on me. I'm at my wits' end. If you'd only help me!"

"How in the world can I?"

"You're the only person who can. If you'd persuade her, as long as this queer mood of Stephen's lasts, to draw his monthly cheque in my name, I'd see that he gets it—and that he uses it. He would, you know, if he thought it came from Boy and me."

I looked at her quickly. "That's why you want me to see her. To get her to give you her son's allowance?"

Her lips parted as if she were about to return an irritated answer; but she twisted them into a smile. "If you like to describe it in that way—I can't help your putting an unkind interpretation on whatever I do. I was prepared for that when I came here." She turned her bright inclement face on me. "If you think I enjoy humiliating myself! After all, it's not so much for Stephen that I ask it as for his mother. Have you thought of that? If she knew that in his crazy pride he was depriving himself of the most necessary things, wouldn't she do anything on earth to prevent it? She's his *real* mother . . . I'm nothing . . ."

"You're everything, if he sees you and listens to you."

She received this with the air of secret triumph that met every allusion to her power over Stephen. Was she right, I wondered, in saying that she loved him even more than his mother did? "Everything?" she murmured deprecatingly. "It's you who are everything, who can help us all. What can I do?"

I pondered a moment, and then said: "You can let me see Stephen."

The colour rushed up under her powder. "Much good that would do—if I could! But I'm afraid you'll find his door barricaded."

"That's a pity," I said coldly.

"It's very foolish of him," she assented.

Our conversation had reached a deadlock, and I saw that she was distinctly disappointed—perhaps even more than I was. I suspected that while I could afford to wait for a solution she could not. "Of course, if Catherine is willing to sit by and see the boy starve"—she began.

"What else can she do? Shall we go over to the Nouveau Luxe bar and study the problem from the cock-tail angle?" I suggested.

Mrs. Brown's brows gathered over her transparent eyes. "You're laughing at me—and at Steve. It's rather heartless of you, you know," she said, making a movement to rise from the deep arm-chair in which I had installed her.

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Her movements, as always, were quick and smooth; she got up and sat down with the ease of youth. But her face startled me—it had suddenly shrunk and withered, so that the glitter of cosmetics hung before it like a veil. A pang of compunction shot through me. I felt that it *was* heartless to make her look like that. I could no longer endure the part I was playing. "I'll—I'll see what I can do to arrange things," I stammered. "If only she's not too servile," I thought, feeling that my next move hung on the way in which she received my reassurance.

She stood up with a quick smile. "Ogre!" she just breathed, her lashes dancing. She was laughing at me under her breath—the one thing she could have done just then without offending me. "Come; we *do* need refreshment, don't we?" She slipped her arm through mine as we crossed the lounge and emerged on the wet pavement.

X

The cosy evening with which Mrs. Brown had tempted me was not productive of much enlightenment. I found Catherine Glenn tired and pale, but happy at my coming, with a sort of furtive school-girl happiness which suggested the same secret apprehension as I had seen in Mrs. Brown's face when she found I would not help her to capture Stephen's allowance. I had already perceived my mistake in letting Mrs. Brown see this, and during our cock-tail epilogue at the Nouveau Luxe had tried to restore her confidence; but her distrust had been aroused, and in spite of her recovered good-humour I felt that I should not be allowed to see Stephen.

In this respect poor Mrs. Glenn could not help me. She could only repeat the lesson which had evidently been drilled into her. "Why should I deny what's so evident—and so natural? When Stevie's ill and unhappy, it's not to me he turns. During so many years he knew nothing of me, never even suspected my existence; and all the while *they* were there, watching over him, loving him, slaving for him. If he concealed his real feelings, it might be only on account of the—the financial inducements; and I like to think my boy's too proud for that. If you do manage to see him, you'll tell him so, won't you? You'll tell him that, unhappy as he's making me, mistaken as he is, I enter into his feelings as—as only his mother can." She broke down, and hid her face from me.

When she regained her composure she rose and went over to the writing-table. From the blotting-book she drew an envelope. "I've drawn this cheque in your name—it may be easier for you to get Stevie to accept a few bank-notes. You must try to persuade him—tell him his behavior is making the Browns just as unhappy as it is me, and that he has no right to be cruel to them, at any rate." She lifted her head and looked into my eyes heroically.

I went home perplexed, and pondering on my next move; but (not wholly to my surprise) the question was settled for me the following morning by a telephone call from Mrs. Brown. Her voice rang out cheerfully.

"Good news! I've seen Steve's doctor—on the sly, of course. He'd kill me if he knew! The doctor says he's really better; you can see him today if you'll promise to stay only a few minutes. Of course I must first persuade Steve himself, the silly boy. You can't think what a savage mood he's in. But I'm sure I can—he's so fond of you. Only before that I want to see you myself—" ("Of course," I said to myself, feeling that here at last was the gist of the communication). "Can I come presently—before you go out? All right; I'll turn up in an hour."

Within the hour she was there; but before her arrival I had decided on my course, and she had probably guessed what it would be. Our first phrases, however, were non-committal. As we exchanged them I saw that Mrs. Brown's self-confidence was weakening, and this incited me to prolong the exchange. Stephen's doctor, she assured me, was most encouraging; one lung only was affected, and that slightly; his recovery now depended on careful nursing, good food, cheerful company—all the things of which, in his foolish obstinacy, he had chosen to deprive himself. She paused expectant——

"And, if Mrs. Glenn handed over his allowance to you, you could ensure his accepting what he's too obstinate to take from his mother?"

Under her carefully prepared complexion the blood rushed to her temples. "I knew you were Steve's best friend!" She looked away quickly, as if to hide the triumph in her eyes.

"Well, if I am, he's got to recognise it by seeing me."

"Of course—of course!" She corrected her impetuosity. "I'll do all I can . . ."

"That's a great deal, as we know." Under their lowered lashes her eyes followed my movements as I turned my coat back to reach an inner pocket. She pressed her lips tight to control their twitching. "There, then!" I said.

"Oh, you angel, you! I should never have dared to ask Catherine," she stammered with a faint laugh as the bank-notes passed from my hand to her bag.

"Mrs. Glenn understood—she always understands."

"She understands when *you* ask," Mrs. Brown insinuated, flashing her lifted gaze on mine. The sense of what was in the bag had already given her a draught of courage, and she added quickly: "Of course I needn't tell you not to speak of all this to Steve. If he knew of our talk it would wreck everything."

"I can see that," I remarked, and she dropped her lids again, as though I had caught her in a blunder.

"Well, I must go; I'll tell him his best friend's coming . . . I'll reason with him . . ." she murmured, trying to disguise her embarrassment in emotion. I saw her to the door, and into Mrs. Glenn's motor, from the interior of which she called back: "You know you're going to make Catherine as happy as me."

Stephen Glenn's new habitation was in a narrow and unsavoury street, and the building itself contrasted mournfully with the quarters in which he had last received me. As I climbed the greasy stairs, I was as much perplexed by the situation as ever. I could not see why Stephen's quarrel with Mrs. Glenn should, even partially, have included the Browns, nor, if it had, why he should be willing to accept from their depleted purse the funds he was too proud to receive from his mother. It gave me a feeling of uneasy excitement to know that behind the door at which I stood the answer awaited me.

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No one answered my knock, so I opened the door and went in. The studio was empty, but a voice from the room beyond called out irritably: "Who is it?" and then, in answer to my name: "Oh, Norcutt—come in."

Stephen Glenn lay in bed, in a small room with a window opening on a dirty inner courtyard. The room was bare and untidy, the bedclothes were tumbled, and he looked at me with the sick man's resentfulness at any intrusion on his lonely pain. "Above all," the look seemed to say, "don't try to be kind."

Seeing that moral pillow-smoothing would be resented I sat down beside him without any comment on the dismalness of the scene, or on his own aspect, much as it disquieted me.

"Well, old man—" I began, wondering how to go on; but he cut short my hesitation: "I've been wanting to see you for ever so long," he said.

In my surprise I had nearly replied: "That's not what I'd been told"—but, resolved to go warily, I rejoined with a sham gaiety: "Well, here I am!"

Stephen gave me the remote look which the sick turn on those arch-aliens, the healthy. "Only, I was afraid if you did come you'd begin and lecture me; and I couldn't stand that—I can't stand anything. I'm *raw!*" he burst out.

"You might have known me better than to think I'd lecture you."

"Oh, I don't know. Naturally the one person you care about in all this is—mother Kit."

"Your mother," I interposed.

He raised his eyebrows with the familiar ironic movement; then they drew together again over his sunken eyes. "I wanted to wait till I was up to discussing things. I wanted to get this fever out of me."

"You don't look feverish now."

"No; they've brought it down. But I'm down with it. I'm very low," he said, with a sort of chill impartiality, as though speaking of some one whose disabilities did not greatly move him. I replied that the best way for him to pull himself up again was to get out of his present quarters, and let himself be nursed and looked after.

"Oh, don't argue!" he interrupted.

"Argue——?"

"You're going to tell me to go back to—to my mother. To let her fatten me up. Well, it's no use. I won't take another dollar from her—not one."

I met this in silence, and after a moment perceived that my silence irritated him more than any attempt at argument. I did not want to irritate him, and I began: "Then why don't you go off again with the Browns? There's nothing you can do that your mother won't understand——"

"And suffer from!" he interjected.

"Oh, as to suffering—she's seasoned."

He bent his slow feverish stare on me. "So am I."

"Well, at any rate, you can spare her by going off at once into good air, and trying your level best to get well. You know as well as I do that nothing else matters to her. She'll be glad to have you go away with the Browns—I'll answer for that."

He gave a short laugh, so harsh and disenchanted that I suddenly felt he was right: to laugh like that he must be suffering as much as his mother. I laid my hand on his thin wrist. "Old man ——"

He jerked away. "No, no. Go away with the Browns? I'd rather be dead. I'd rather hang on here till I *am* dead."

The outburst was so unexpected that I sat in silent perplexity. Mrs. Brown had told the truth, then, when she said he hated them too? Yet he saw them, ıe accepted their money . . . The darkness deepened as I peered into it.

Stephen lay with half-closed lids, and I saw that whatever enlightenment he had to give would have to be forced from him. The perception made me take a sudden resolve.

"When one is physically down and out one *is* raw, as you say: one hates everybody. I know you don't really feel like that about the Browns; but if they've got on your nerves, and you want to go off by yourself, you might at least accept the money they're ready to give you——"

He raised himself on his elbow with an ironical stare. "Money? They borrow money; they don't give it."

"Ah—" I thought; but aloud I continued: "They're prepared to give it now. Mrs. Brown tells me——"

He lifted his hand with a gesture that cut me short; then he leaned back, and drew a painful breath or two. Beads of moisture came out on his forehead. "If she told you that, it means she's got more out of Kit. Or out of Kit through *you*—is that it?" he brought out roughly.

His clairvoyance frightened me almost as much as his physical distress—and the one seemed, somehow, a function of the other, as though the wearing down of his flesh had made other people's diaphanous to him, and he could see through it to their hearts. "Stephen —" I began imploringly.

Again his lifted hand checked me. "No, wait." He breathed hard again and shut his eyes. Then he opened them and looked into mine. "There's only one way out of this."

"For you to be reasonable."

"Call it that if you like. I've got to see mother Kit—and without their knowing it."

My perplexity grew, and my agitation with it. Could it be that the end of the Browns was in sight? I tried to remember that my first business was to avoid communicating my agitation to Stephen. In a tone that I tried to keep steady I said: "Nothing could make her happier. You're all she lives for."

"She'll have to find something else soon."

"No, no. Only let her come, and she'll make you well. Mothers work miracles——"

His inscrutable gaze rested on mine. "So they say. Only, you see, she's not my mother."

He spoke so quietly, in such a low detached tone, that at first the words carried no meaning to me. If he had been excited I should have suspected fever, delirium; but voice and eyes were clear. "Now you understand," he added.

I sat beside him stupidly, speechless, unable to think. "I don't understand anything," I stammered. Such a possibility as his words suggested had never once occurred to me. Yet he wasn't delirious, he wasn't raving—it was I whose brain was reeling as if in fever.

"Well, I'm not the long-lost child. The Browns are not *her* Browns. It's all a lie and an imposture. We faked it up between us, Chrissy and I did—her simplicity made it so cursedly easy. Boy didn't have much to do with it; poor

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old Boy! He just sat back and took his share . . . *Now* you do see," he repeated, in the explanatory tone in which he might have set forth some one else's shortcomings.

My mind was still a blur while he poured out the details of the conspiracy —the sordid tale of a trio of society adventurers come to the end of their resources, and suddenly clutching at this unheard of chance of rescue, affluence, peace. But gradually, as I listened, the glare of horror with which he was blinding me turned into a strangely clear and penetrating light, forcing its way into obscure crannies, elucidating the incomprehensible, picking out one by one the links that bound together his fragments of fact. I saw—but what I saw my gaze shrank from.

"Well," I heard him say, between his difficult breaths, "now do you begin to believe me?"

"I don't know. I can't tell. Why on earth," I broke out, "if this isn't all a ghastly invention, should you want to see your mother?"

"To tell her what I've just told you —make a clean breast of it. Can't you see?"

"I see you want to kill her. That's all."

He grew paler under his paleness. "I can't go on like this. I've got to tell her. I want to do it at once. I thought I could keep up the lie a little longer, but I can't. I held out because I wanted to get well first, and paint her picture—leave her *that* to be proud of, anyhow! Now that's all over, and there's nothing left but the naked shame . . ." He opened his eyes and fixed them again on mine. "I want you to bring her here today—without *their* knowing it. You've got to manage it. It will be the first decent thing I've done in years."

"It will be the most unpardonable. The time's past for trying to square your own conscience. What you've got to do now is to go on lying to her—you've got to get well, if only to go on lying to her!"

A thin smile flickered over his face. "I can't get well."

"That's as it may be. You can spare her, anyhow."

"You mean by letting things go on like this?" He lay for a long time silent; then his lips drew up in a queer grimace. "It might be a sort of expiation——"

"It's the only one."

"It's the worst."

He sank back wearily. I saw that fatigue had silenced him, and I wondered if I ought to steal away. My presence could not but be agitating; yet it seemed almost as dangerous to leave him alone as to stay. I glanced about the room, and saw a flask half full of brandy on the table, a glass beside it. I poured out some brandy and held it to his lips. He emptied the glass slowly, and as his head fell back I heard him say: "Before I knew her I thought I could pull it off . . . But, you see, her sweetness . . ."

"If she heard you say that it would make up for everything."

He opened his eyes in wonder. "Even for what I've told you?"

"For everything. Hold your tongue and just let her come and nurse you."

He made no answer, but under his lids I saw a tear or two.

"Let her come—let her come," I insisted, taking his hand in mine.

XI

Nature does not seem to care for dramatic climaxes. Instead of allowing Stephen to die at once, his secret on his lips, she laid on him the harsher task of living on through weary weeks, and keeping back the truth till the end.

As the result of my visit, he consented, the next day, to be carried back in an ambulance to Mrs. Glenn's; and when I saw their meeting it seemed to me that ties of blood were frail compared to what drew them together. After she had fallen on her knees at his bedside, and drawn his head to her breast, I was almost sure he would not speak; and he did not.

I was able to stay with Mrs. Glenn till Stephen died; then I had to hurry back to my post in Washington. When I took leave of her, she told me that she was following on the next steamer with Stephen's body—and the Browns. She wished her son to have a New York funeral, a funeral like his father's, at which all their old friends could be present. "Not like poor Phil's, you know—" and I recalled the importance she had attached to the presence of her husband's friends at his funeral. "It's something to remember afterward," she said, with dry eyes. "And it will be their only way of knowing my Stephen . . ." It was of course impossible to exclude Mr. and Mrs. Brown from these rites; and accordingly they sailed with her.

If Stephen had recovered she had meant, as I knew, to reopen her New York house; but now that was not to be thought of. She sold the house, and all it contained, and a few weeks later sailed once more for Paris—again with the Browns.

I had resolved, after Stephen's death —when the first shock was over—to do what I could toward relieving her of the Browns' presence. Though I could not tell her the truth about them, I might perhaps have helped her to effect some transaction which would relieve her of their company. But I soon saw this was out of the question; and the reason deepened my perplexity. It was simply that the Browns—or at least Mrs. Brown—had become Mrs. Glenn's chief consolation. The two women, so incessantly at odds while Stephen lived, were now joined in a common desolation. It seemed like profaning Catherine Glenn's grief to compare Mrs. Brown's to it; yet, in the first weeks after Stephen's death, I had to admit that Mrs. Brown mourned Stephen as genuinely, as inconsolably, as his supposed mother. Indeed, it would be nearer the truth to say that Mrs. Brown's grief was more hopeless and rebellious than the other's. After all, as Mrs. Glenn said, it was much worse for Chrissy. "She had so little compared to me; and she gave as much, I suppose. Think what I had that she's never known; those precious months of waiting for him, when he was part of me, when we were one body and one soul. And then, years afterward, when I was searching for him, and knowing all the while that I should surely find him; and after that, our perfect life together—our perfect understanding. All that—there's all that left to me! And what did she have? Why, when she shows me his little socks and shoes (she's kept them all so carefully) they're my baby's socks and shoes, not hers—and I know she's thinking of it when we cry over them. I see now that I've been unjust to her . . . and cruel . . . For he *did* love me best; and that ought to have made me kinder to her ——"

Yes; I had to recognise that Mrs. Brown's grief was as genuine as her rival's, that she suffered more bleakly and bitterly. Every turn of the strange story had been improbable and incal-

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culable, and this new freak of fate was the most unexpected. But since it brought a softening to my poor friend's affliction, and offered a new pretext for her self-devotion, I could only hold my tongue and be thankful that the Browns were at last serving some humaner purpose.

The next time I returned to Paris the strange trio were still together, and still living in Mrs. Glenn's apartment. Its walls were now hung with Stephen's paintings and sketches—among them many unfinished attempts at a portrait of Mrs. Glenn—and the one mother seemed as eager as the other to tell me that a well-known collector of modern art had been so struck by their quality that there was already some talk of a posthumous exhibition. Mrs. Brown triumphed peculiarly in the affair. It was she who had brought the collector to see the pictures, she who had always known that Stephen had genius; it was with the Browns' meagre pennies that he had been able to carry on his studies at Julian's, long before Mrs. Glenn had appeared. "Catherine doesn't pretend to know much about art. Do you, my dear? But, as I tell her, when you're a picture yourself you don't have to bother about other people's pictures. There—your hat's crooked again! Just let me straighten it, darling—" I saw Mrs. Glenn wince a little, as she had winced the day at Les Calanques when Mrs. Brown, with an arch side-glance at me, had given a more artful twist to her friend's white hair.

It was evident that time, in drying up the source which had nourished the two women's sympathy, had revived their fundamental antagonism. It was equally clear, however, that Mrs. Brown was making every effort to keep on good terms with Mrs. Glenn. That substantial benefits thereby accrued to her I had no doubt; but at least she kept up in Catherine's mind the illusion of the tie between them.

Mrs. Brown had certainly sorrowed for Stephen as profoundly as a woman of her kind could sorrow; more profoundly, indeed, than I had thought possible. Even now, when she spoke of him, her metallic voice broke, her metallic mask softened. On the rare occasions when I found myself alone with her (and I had an idea she saw to it that they were rare) she spoke so tenderly of Stephen, so affectionately of Mrs. Glenn, that I could only suppose she knew nothing of my last talk with the poor fellow. If she had, she would almost certainly have tried to ensure my silence; unless, as I sometimes imagined, a supremer art made her pretend unawareness. But, as always when I speculated on Mrs. Brown, I ended up against a blank wall of conjecture.

The exhibition of Stephen's pictures took place, and caused (I learned from Mrs. Glenn) a little flutter in the inner circle of connaisseurs. Mrs. Glenn deluged me with newspaper rhapsodies which she doubtless never imagined had been bought. But presently, as a result of the show, a new difference arose between the women. The pictures were sufficiently remarked for several purchasers to present themselves, and their offers were so handsome that Mrs. Brown thought they should be accepted. After all Stephen would have regarded the sale of the pictures as the best proof of his success; if they remained hidden away at Mrs. Glenn's, she, who had the custody of his name, was dooming it to obscurity. Nevertheless she persisted in refusing. If selling her darling's pictures was the price of glory, then she must cherish his genius in secret. Could any one imagine that she would ever part with a single stroke of his brush? She was his mother; no one else had a voice in the matter. I divined that the struggle between herself and Mrs. Brown had been not only sharp but prolonged, and marked by a painful interchange of taunts. "If it hadn't been for me," Mrs. Brown argued, "the pictures would never have existed"; and "If it hadn't been for me," the other retorted, "my Stephen would never have existed." It ended—as I had foreseen—in the adoptive parents accepting from Mrs. Glenn a sum equivalent to their estimated value of the pictures. The quarrel quieted down, and a few months later Mrs. Glenn was remorsefully accusing herself of having been too hard on Chrissy.

So the months passed. With their passage news came to me more rarely; but I gathered from Mrs. Glenn's infrequent letters that she had been ill, and from her almost illegible writing that her poor hands were stiffening with rheumatism. Finally, a year later, a letter announced that the doctors had warned her against spending her winters in the damp climate of Paris, and that the apartment had been disposed of, and its contents (including of course Stephen's pictures) transported to a villa at Nice. The Browns had found the villa and managed the translation—with their usual kindness. After that there was a long silence.

It was not until over two years later that I returned to Europe; and as my short holiday was taken in winter, and I meant to spend it in Italy, I took a steamer directly to Villefranche. I had not announced my visit to Mrs. Glenn. I was not sure till the last moment of being able to get off; but that was not the chief cause of my silence. Though relations between the incongruous trio seemed to have become harmonious, it was not without apprehension that I had seen Mrs. Glenn leave New York with the Browns. She was old, she was tired and stricken; how long would it be before she became a burden to her beneficiaries? This was what I wanted to find out without giving them time to prepare themselves or their companion for my visit. Mrs. Glenn had written that she wished very particularly to see me, and had begged me to let her know if there were a chance of my coming abroad; but though this increased my anxiety it strengthened my resolve to arrive unannounced, and I merely replied that she could count on seeing me as soon as I was able to get away.

Though some months had since gone by I was fairly sure of finding her still at Nice, for in the newspapers I had bought on landing I had lit on several allusions to Mr. and Mrs. Boydon Brown. Apparently the couple had an active press-agent, for an attentive world was daily supplied with a minute description of Mrs. "Boy" Brown's casino toilets, the value of the golf or pigeon-shooting cups offered by Mr. "Boy" Brown to various fashionable sporting clubs, and the names of the titled guests whom they entertained at the local "Lidos" and "Jardins Fleuris." I wondered how much the chronicling of these events was costing Mrs. Glenn, but reminded myself that it was the

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price she had to pay for the hours of communion over Stephen's socks. At any rate it proved that my old friend was still in the neighbourhood; and the next day I set out to find her.

I waited till the afternoon, on the chance of her being alone at the hour when mundane affairs were most likely to engage the Browns; but when my taxi-driver had brought me to their villa I found the garden-gate locked and the shutters closed. The sudden fear of some new calamity seized me. My first thought was that Mrs. Glenn must have died; yet if her death had occurred before my sailing I could hardly have failed to hear of it, and if it was more recent I must have seen it announced in the papers I had read since landing. Besides, if the Browns had so lately lost their benefactress they would hardly have played such a part in the social chronicles I had been studying. A change of address need not portend a tragedy; and when at length a reluctant portress appeared in answer to my ringing she said yes, if it was the Americans I was after I was right: they had moved a week ago. Moved—and where to? She shrugged and didn't know; but probably not far, with the old white-haired lady so ill and helpless.

"Ill and helpless—then why did they move?"

She shrugged again. "When people don't pay their rent, they have to move, don't they? When they don't even settle with the butcher and baker before they go, or with the laundress who was fool enough to do their washing—and it's I who speak to you, Monsieur!"

This was worse than I had imagined. I produced a bank-note, and in return the victimized concierge admitted that she had secured the fugitives' new address—though they were naturally not anxious to have it known. As I had surmised it was within the kindly bounds of the principality of Monaco; and the taxi carried me to a small shabby hotel in one of the steep streets above the Casino. I could imagine nothing less in harmony with Catherine Glenn or her condition than to be ill and unhappy in such a place. My only consolation was that now perhaps there might be an end to the disastrous adventure. "After all," I thought, as I looked at the dreary front of the hotel, "if the catastrophe has come they can't have any reasons for hanging on to her."

A red-faced lady with a false front and false teeth emerged from the back-office to receive me.

Madame Glenn—Madame Brown? Oh, yes; they were staying at the hotel—both were upstairs now, she believed. Perhaps Monsieur was the gentleman that Madame Brown was expecting? She had left word that if he came he was to go up without being announced.

I was inspired to say that I was that gentleman; at which the landlady rejoined that she was sorry the lift was out of order, but that I would find the ladies at number 5 on the third floor. Before she had finished I was up the first flight.

A few steps down an unventilated corridor brought me to number 5; but I did not have to knock, for the door was ajar—perhaps in expectation of the other gentleman. I pushed it open, and entered a small plushy sitting-room, with faded mimosa in ornate vases, newspapers and cigarette-ends scattered on the dirty carpet, and a bronzed-over plaster Bayadère posturing before the mantelpiece mirror. If my first glance took such sharp note of these details it is because they seemed almost as out of keeping with Catherine Glenn as the table laden with gin and bitters, empty cock-tail glasses and disks of sodden lemon.

It was not the first time it had occurred to me that I was partly responsible for Mrs. Glenn's unhappy situation. The growing sense of that responsibility had been one of my reasons for trying to keep an eye on her, for wanting her to feel that in case of need she could always count on me. But on the whole my conscience had not been oppressed. The impulse which had made me exact from Stephen the promise never to undeceive her had necessarily governed my own conduct. I had only to recall Catherine Glenn as I had first known her to feel sure that her life had been richer and deeper than if she had spent it, childless and purposeless, on the solemn upholstery of her New York house. I had had nothing to do with her starting on her strange quest; but I was certain that in what had followed she had so far found more happiness than sorrow.

But now? As I stood in that wretched tawdry room I wondered if I had not laid too heavy a burden on my conscience in keeping the truth from her. Suddenly I said to myself: "The time has come—I must get her away from these people." But then I remembered how Stephen's death had drawn the two women together, and wondered if, after all, to destroy that tie would not be the crowning cruelty.

I was still uneasily deliberating when I heard a voice behind the door opposite the one by which I had entered. The room beyond must have been darkened, for I had not noticed before that this door was also partly open. "Well, have you had your nap?" the voice said irritably. "Is there anything you want before I go out? I told you that the man who's going to arrange for the loan is coming for me. He'll be here in a minute." The voice was Mrs. Brown's, but so sharpened and altered that I hardly knew it. I said to myself: "This is how she speaks when she thinks there's no one listening."

There was an indistinct murmur in reply; then the rattle of drawn-back curtain-rings; then Mrs. Brown continuing: "Well, you may as well sign the letter now. Here it is—you've only got to write your name . . . Your glasses? I don't know where your glasses are—you're always dropping your things about. I'm sorry I can't keep a maid to wait on you—but there's nothing in this letter you need be afraid of. I've told you before that it's only a formality. Boy's told you so too, hasn't he? I don't suppose you mean to suggest that we're trying to swindle you out of your money, do you? We've got to have enough to keep going. Here, let me hold your hand while you sign. My hand's shaky too . . . it's all this beastly worry . . . Don't think you're the only person who's had a bad time of it . . . Why, what's the matter? Why are you pushing me away——?"

Till now I had stood motionless, unabashed by the fact that I was eavesdropping. I was ready enough to stoop to that if there was no other way of getting at the truth. But at the question: "Why are you pushing me away?" I knocked hurriedly at the door of the inner room.

There was a silence after my knock. "There he is! You'll have to sign now," I heard Mrs. Brown exclaim; and I

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opened the door and went in. The room was a bedroom; like the other, it was untidy and shabby. I noticed a stack of canvases, framed and unframed, piled up against the wall. In an arm-chair near the window Mrs. Glenn was seated. She was wrapped in some sort of dark dressing-gown, and a lace cap covered her white hair. The face that looked out from it had still the same carven beauty; but it had dwindled from marble to worn ivory. Her body too had shrunk, so that, sunk low in her chair, under her loose garments, she seemed to have turned into a little broken doll. Mrs. Brown, on the contrary, perhaps by contrast, appeared large and almost towering. At first glance I was more startled by the change in her appearance than in Mrs. Glenn's. The latter had merely followed, more quickly than I had hoped she would, the natural decline of the years; whereas Mrs. Brown seemed like another woman. It was not only that she had grown stout and heavy, or that her complexion had coarsened so noticeably under the skilful make-up. In spite of her good clothes and studied coiffure there was something haphazard and almost untidy in her appearance. Her hat, I noticed, had slipped a little sideways on her smartly waved head, her bright shallow eyes looked blurred and red, and she held herself with a sort of vacillating erectness. Gradually the incredible fact was borne in on me; Mrs. Brown had been drinking.

"Why, where on earth—?" she broke out bewildered as my identity dawned on her. She put up a hand to straighten her hat, and in doing so dragged it over too far on the other side.

"I beg your pardon. I was told to come to number 5, and as there was no one in the sitting-room I knocked on this door."

"Oh, you knocked? I didn't hear you knock," said Mrs. Brown angrily; but I had no ears for her, for my old friend had also recognized me, and was holding out her trembling hands. "I knew you'd come—I said you'd come!" she cried.

Mrs. Brown laughed. "Well, you've said it often enough. But it's taken some time for it to come true."

"I knew you'd come," Mrs. Glenn repeated, and I felt her hand pass over my hair as I stooped to kiss her.

"Lovers' meeting!" Mrs. Brown tossed at us with an unsteady gaiety; then she leaned against the door, and stood looking on ironically. "You didn't expect to find us in this palatial abode, did you?"

"No. I went to the villa first."

Mrs. Glenn's eyes dwelt on me softly. I sat down beside her, and she put her hand in mine. Her withered fingers trembled incessantly.

"Perhaps," Mrs. Brown went on, "if you'd come sooner you might have arranged things so that we could have stayed there. I'm powerless—I can't do anything with her. The fact that for years I looked after the child she deserted weighs nothing with her. She doesn't seem to think she owes us anything."

Mrs. Glenn listened without looking at her accuser. She kept her large sunken eyes fixed on mine. "There's no money left," she said when the other ended.

"No money! No money! That's always the tune nowadays. There was always plenty of money for her precious —money for all his whims and fancies, for journeys, for motors, for doctors, for —well, what's the use of going on? But now there's nobody left but Boy and me, who slaved for her darling for years, who spent our last penny on him when his mother'd forgotten his existence—now there's nothing left! Now she can't afford anything; now she won't even pay her own bills; now she'd sooner starve herself to death than let us have what she owes us . . ."

"My dear—my dear," Mrs. Glenn murmured, her eyes still on mine.

"Oh, don't 'my dear' me," Mrs. Brown retorted passionately. "What you mean is: 'How can you talk like that before him?' I suppose you think I wish he hadn't come. Well, you never were more mistaken. I'm glad he's here; I'm glad he's found out where you're living, and how you're living. Only this time I mean him to hear our side of the story instead of only yours."

Mrs. Glenn pressed my hand in her twitching fingers. "She wants me to sign a paper. I don't understand."

"You don't understand? Didn't Boy explain it to you? You said you understood then." Mrs. Brown turned to me with a shrug. "These whims and capers . . . all I want is money enough to pay the bills . . . so that we're not turned out of this hole too . . ."

"There is no money," Mrs. Glenn softly reiterated.

My heart stood still. The scene must at all costs be ended, yet I could think of no way of silencing the angry woman. At length I said: "If you'll leave me for a little while with Mrs. Glenn perhaps she'll be able to tell me——"

"How's she to tell you what she says she doesn't understand herself? If I leave her with you all she'll do is to tell you lies about us—I found that out long ago." Mrs. Brown took a few stiff steps in my direction, and then, catching at the window-curtain, looked at me with a foolish laugh. "Not that I'm pining for her society. I have a good deal of it in the long run. But you'll excuse me for saying that, as far as this matter is concerned, it's an affair between Mrs. Glenn and me."

I tightened my hold on Mrs. Glenn's hand, and sat looking at Mrs. Brown in the hope that a silent exchange of glances might lead farther than the vain bandying of arguments. For a moment she seemed dominated; I began to think she had read in my eyes the warning I had tried to put there. If there was any money left I might be able to get it from Catherine after her own attempts had failed; that was what I was trying to remind her of, and what she understood my looks were saying. Once before I had done the trick; supposing she were to trust me to try again? I saw that she wavered; but her brain was not alert, as it had been on that other occasion. She stared at me through a blur of drink and anger; I could see her thoughts clutching uneasily at my suggestion and then losing their hold on it. "Oh, we all know you think you're God Almighty!" she broke out with a contemptuous toss.

"I think I could help you if I could have a quiet talk with Mrs. Glenn."

"Well, you can have your quiet talk." She looked about her and pulling up a chair plumped down into it heavily. "I'd love to hear what you've got to say to each other."

Mrs. Glenn's hand began to shake again. She turned her head toward Mrs. Brown. "My dear, I should like to see my friend alone."

" 'I should like! I should like!' I dare-

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say you would. It's always been what *you*'d like—but now it's going to be what I choose. And I choose to assist at the conversation between Mrs. Glenn and Mr. Norcutt, instead of letting them quietly tell lies about me behind my back."

"Oh, Chrissy—" my old friend murmured; then she turned to me and said: "You had better come another day."

Mrs. Brown looked at me with a sort of feeble cunning. "Oh, he needn't go away. I've told you my friend's coming—he'll be here in a minute. If you'll sign that letter I'll take it to the bank with him, and Mr. Norcutt can stay here and tell you all the news. Now wouldn't you like that!" she concluded coaxingly.

Looking into Mrs. Glenn's pale frightened face I was on the point of saying: "Well, sign it then, whatever it is—anything to get her to go." But Mrs. Glenn straightened her drooping shoulders and repeated softly: "I can't sign it."

A flush rose to Mrs. Brown's forehead. "You can't? That's final, is it?" She turned to me. "It's all money she owes us, mind you—money we've advanced to her—in one way or another. Every penny of it. And now she sits there and says she won't pay us!"

Mrs. Glenn, twisting her fingers into mine, gave a barely audible laugh. "Now he's here I'm safe," she said.

The crimson of Mrs. Brown's face darkened to thick purple. Her lower lip trembled and I saw she was struggling for words that her dimmed brain could not supply. "God Almighty—you think he's God Almighty!" She evidently felt the inadequacy of this, for she stood up suddenly, and coming close to Mrs. Glenn's arm-chair, stood looking down on her in impotent anger. "Well, I'll show you—." She turned to me, moved by another impulse. "You know you could make her sign if you chose to."

Our eyes met again. Hers were saying: "It's your last chance—it's *her* last chance, I warn you—" and mine replying: "Nonsense, you can't frighten us; you can't even frighter *her* while I'm here. And if she doesn't want to sign you shan't force her to. I have something up my sleeve that would shut you up in five seconds if you knew."

She kept her thick stare on mine till I felt as if my silent signal must have penetrated it. But she said nothing, and at last I exclaimed: "You know well enough the risk you're running——"

Perhaps I had better not have spoken. But that dumb dialogue was getting on my nerves. If she wouldn't see, it was time to make her——

Ah, she saw now—she saw fast enough! My words seemed to have cleared the last fumes from her brain. She gave me back my look with one almost as steady; then she laughed.

"The risk I'm running? Oh, that's it, is it? That's the pull you thought you had over me? Well, I'm glad to know—and I'm glad to tell you that I've known all along that you knew. I'm sick and tired of all the humbug—if she won't sign I'm going to tell her everything myself. So now the cards are on the table, and you can take your choice. It's up to you. The risk's on your side now!"

The unaccountable woman—drunkenly incoherent a moment ago, and now hitting the nail on the head with such fiendish precision! I sat silent, meditating her hideous challenge without knowing how to meet it. And then I became aware that a quiver had passed over Mrs. Glenn's face, which had become smaller and more ivory-yellow than before. She leaned toward me as if Mrs. Brown, who stood close above us, could not hear what we were saying.

"What is it she means to tell me? I don't care unless it's something bad about Stevie. And it couldn't be that, could it? How does she know? No one can come between a son and his mother."

Mrs. Brown gave one of her sudden laughs. "A son and his mother? I daresay not! Only I'm just about fed up with having you think you're his mother."

It was the one thing I had not foreseen—that she would possess herself of my threat and turn it against me. The risk was too deadly—and so no doubt she would have felt if she had been in a state to measure it. She was not; and there lay the peril.

Mrs. Glenn sat quite still after the other's outcry, and I hoped it had blown past her like some mere rag of rhetoric. Then I saw that the meaning of the words had reached her, but without carrying conviction. She glanced at me with the flicker of a smile. "Now she says I'm not his mother—!" It's her last round of ammunition; but don't be afraid—it won't make me sign, the smile seemed to whisper to me.

Mrs. Brown caught the unspoken whisper, and her exasperation rushed to meet it. "You don't believe me? I knew you wouldn't! Well, ask your friend here; you always believe everything he says. He's known the truth for ever so long—long before Stephen died he knew he wasn't your son."

I jumped up, as if to put myself between my friend and some bodily harm: but she held fast to my hand with her clinging twitching fingers. "As if she knew what it is to have a son! All those long months when he's one with you . . . *Mothers* know," she said.

"Mothers, yes! I don't say you didn't have a son and desert him. I say that son wasn't Stephen. Don't you suppose I know? Sometimes I've wanted to laugh in your face at the way you went on about him . . . Sometimes I used to have to rush out of the room, just to have my laugh out by myself . . ."

Mrs. Brown stopped with a gasp, as if the fury of the outburst had shaken her back to soberness, and she saw for the first time what she had done. Mrs. Glenn sat with her head bowed; her hand had grown cold in mine. I looked at Mrs. Brown and said: "Now won't you leave us? I suppose there's nothing left to say."

She blinked at me through her heavy lids; I saw she was wavering. But at the same moment Mrs. Glenn's clutch tightened; she drew me down to her, and looked at me out of her deep eyes. "What does she mean when she says you knew about Stevie?"

I pressed her hand without answering. All my mind was concentrated on the effort of silencing my antagonist and getting her out of the room. Mrs. Brown leaned in the window-frame and looked down on us. I could see that she was dismayed at what she had said, and yet exultant; and my business was to work on the dismay before the exultation mastered it. But Mrs. Glenn still held me down: her eyes seemed to be forcing their gaze into me. "Is it true?" she asked almost inaudibly.

"True?" Mrs. Brown burst out. "Ask him to swear to you it's not true—see what he looks like then! He was in the conspiracy, you old simpleton."

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Mrs. Glenn's head straightened itself again on her weak neck; she looked at me with a singular majesty. "You were my friend——"

"I've always been your friend."

"Then I don't have to believe her?"

Mrs. Brown seemed to have been gathering herself up for a last onslaught. She saw that I was afraid to try to force her from the room, and the discovery gave her a sense of hazy triumph, as if all that was left to her was to defy me. "Tell her I'm lying—why don't you tell her so?" she taunted me.

I knelt down by my old friend and put my arm about her. "Will you come away with me now—at once? I'll take you wherever you want to go . . . I'll look after you . . . I'll always look after you."

Mrs. Glenn's eyes grew wider. She seemed to weigh my words till their sense penetrated her; then she said, in the same low voice: "It's true, then?"

"Come away with me, come away with me," I repeated.

I felt her trying to rise; but her feet failed under her and she sank back. "Yes, take me away from her," she said.

Mrs. Brown laughed. "Oh, that's it, is it? 'Come away from that bad woman, and I'll explain everything, and make it all right' . . . Why don't you adopt *him* instead of Steve? I daresay that's what he's been after all the time. That's the reason he was so determined we shouldn't have your money . . ." She drew back, and pointed to the door. "You can go with him—who's to prevent you? I couldn't if I wanted to. I see now it's for him we've been nursing your precious millions . . . Well, go with him, and he'll tell you the whole story . . ." A strange secretive smile stole over her face. "All except one bit . . . there's one bit he doesn't know; but *you're* going to know it now."

She stepped nearer, and I held up my hand; but she took no notice. Her eyes were on Mrs. Glenn. "What he doesn't know is why we fixed the thing up. Steve wasn't your real son any more than he was my adopted one. Adopted son, indeed! He was my lover. There—do you understand?—my Lover! That's why we faked up that ridiculous adoption story, and all the rest of it—because he was ill, and down and out, and I had to have money for him, and didn't care how I got it, didn't care for anything on earth but seeing him well again, and happy." She stopped and drew a panting breath. "There—I'd rather have told you that than have your money. I'd rather you should know what Steve was to me than think any longer that you owned him . . ."

I was still kneeling by Mrs. Glenn, my arm about her. Once I felt her heart give a great shake; then it seemed to stop altogether. Her eyes were no longer turned to me, but fixed in a wide stare on Mrs. Brown. A short tremor convulsed her face; then, to my astonishment, it was smoothed into an expression of childish serenity, and a faint smile, half playful, half ironic, stole over it.

She raised her hand and pointed tremulously to the other's disordered headgear. "My dear—your hat's crooked," she said.

For a moment I was bewildered; then I saw that, very gently, she was at last returning the taunt that Mrs. Brown had so often addressed to her. The shot fired, she leaned back against me with the satisfied sigh of a child; and immediately I understood that Mrs. Brown's blow had gone wide. A pitying fate had darkened Catherine Glenn's mind at the exact moment when to see clearly would have been the final agony.

Mrs. Brown understood too. She stood looking at us doubtfully; then she said in an uncertain voice: "Well, I had to tell her."

She turned and went out of the room, and I continued to kneel by Mrs. Glenn. Her eyes had gradually clouded, and I doubted if she still knew me; but her lips nursed their soft smile, and I saw that she must have been waiting for years to launch that little shaft at her enemy.

TWO SONNETS

By Marjorie Allen Seiffert

RETURN TO BATTLE

Rise, young Diana, after the onslaught ceases!
Your helmet with the silver plume is shattered,
Your narrow shield is cleft in a dozen pieces
And all your shining weapons lost or scattered.
Though you are wounded deepest in your pride
Your heart too bleeds a little . . . it will mend . . .
But not if you lie weeping on your side
Waiting for death or for the pain to end.

Rise and hold wide your eyes with fury, lest
The enemy see your secret anguish. Wear
No shield but courage on your naked breast,
Nor any helmet but your glittering hair,
And so return to battle, since despair
Provides the weapon that shall serve you best.

CERTAIN METALS

Certain metals occur upon this earth,
Rarely. Metals that man can do without.
He catalogues them with uneasy doubt
That some Eternal Purpose gave them birth.
Of iron courage, let him find no dearth,
For golden beauty, let him be devout,
Yet will he question what earth was about
Bearing this hidden treasure of no worth.

I ponder too (since I have well explored
My tiny universe of heart and brain
And know what gold its narrow mines afford)
The secret of this sterile, buried vein
Of love, immutably and deeply stored
Beneath all wisdom and beyond all gain.

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